THE COMMONWEAL

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CONTENTS

The New Cradle Song 505
Week by Week 507
The Mystical Pathway 510
Congress Adjourns 511
The Dawn of the Golden Day ..... Michael Williams 512
Mystic and Man of Affairs ..... Henry Morton Robinson 514
These Are the Kings of Judah (*verse*) ..... Elspeth Givens 516
Needed: A Moral Housecleaning ..... Elisabeth Marbury 517
Brooks Adams ..... Summerfield Baldwin 519
Our Philippines and China ..... R. Dana Skinner 520
Communications 522
Poems ..... Paul Claudel, Katharine Allison MacLean, Claribel Weeks Avery, Morton Zabel, Molly Anderson Haley, Catherine Parmenter 523
The Play ..... R. Dana Skinner 524
Books ..... Henry Longan Stuart, Frederick H. Martens, Ernest Brennecke, Jr., George N. Shuster, Grenville Vernon, R. I. C., T. C. 526
The Quiet Corner 531

THE NEW CRADLE SONG

"WHAT a lot of embarrassment it would save to Catholics and Protestants alike," writes Winfred Ernest Garrison, reviewing the published volumes of the Calvert Series in the Christian Century, "if all the churches would realize that it is not their business to put behind any scientific theory whatever the weight of their ecclesiastical authority." One suspects that although the historical Galileo episode was the occasion for this remark, it was dictated rather by the controversy over evolution which has so violently disturbed certain districts of the United States. Originally identified with Tennessee, the controversy has spread until at present six states have, by legislative enactment, condemned the teaching, in public schools, of scientific theories "not supported by the Bible." Meanwhile, the states of Arkansas, Missouri, and North Carolina have officially rejected anti-evolution measures, in some instances by very small margins. Indeed, the Arkansas state senate got rid of the matter only by cunningly circumventing a vote. It is said that at least six other states will ring with debates on "monkey business," even though hostility toward what is termed "unenlightened legislation" is growing. The Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, for instance, officially declared that interference with the proper teaching of science in American schools and colleges is "futile and can serve no good."

It is easy to deride the literalism, the intolerance, the insufficient scientific preparation of many representatives of religion who have entered this great educational fight. Mr. Bryan marked their type once and for all—the type of sincere but limited Bible reader, conscious of certain dangerous emancipations now characteristic of youth. It is also easy to declare, with the writer quoted above, that the church ought not to identify its authority with such problems. But having done all that, you are still miles away from the heart of the matter. What the sincere traditional Protestant in the United States is facing (together with, to some extent at least, his Catholic fellow-citizen) is a prevalent intellectual atmosphere similar to what is termed laicism in France. Public opinion is our great democratic force, revealing itself as far more effective in the domain of morals than in the sphere of government; and when this opinion gradually rubs out all the sturdy old Christian concepts and writes over them bright up-to-date but materialistic shibboleths, the churches can no more be indifferent toward it than they can smile tolerantly at the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The fate of Protestantism has been to depend upon

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education by public opinion, rather than upon education under the direction of ecclesiastical authority. In an article on The Break-Up of Protestantism, contributed to the current number of the Atlantic Monthly by Dr. Herbert Parrish (an article with the rash liberal generalizations of which we are certainly not in agreement) sums up the practical effects of this situation very pertinently:

"Protestant enthusiasm weakened. The first evidence of this was in Sunday-school attendance. Up to the 'eighties the statistical curve had shown a steady increase. In the late 'eighties it began steadily to decline. It has fallen rapidly ever since. The latest report indicates that there are now over twenty-seven millions of American children, nominally Protestant, not enrolled in any Sunday school. The Sunday school, now called the church school, has become the despair or the joke of the Protestant ministry almost everywhere. Nor has the week-day school of religion yet met the case. Parents, persuaded that the Bible as a document of historical and scientific facts is under fire, are no longer insistent upon sending their already weary children to such dull exercises."

If this be something like an accurate description of the situation, one can only deplore while accepting it. Our era must witness, regardless of a wide-spread contemporary interest in the person of Christ and in certain aspects of religious philosophy, a still further veering of public opinion toward the standards of "enlightenment." What has always mattered about the teaching of evolutionary doctrine is the teacher. In the final analysis, it really makes very little difference whether one believes the human body to have been prepared by various antecedent organisms, or if one thinks of it as having grown suddenly out of the earth, like a flower. Certainly, people have never worried greatly over quite equally vital characteristics of the earth's structure or the nature of matter. When Spinoza had "explained" the plague of locusts by means of a weather forecast, he may innocently have imagined that he was disproving the intervention of God in cosmic processes. But surely he might have considered God capable of employing weather! The point of great consequence is simply whether one has an earnest, simple faith in God, and confidence in the authority of Christian religion. Possessing these things, one is always sure to find that there is no real conflict between scientific truth and religious truth, regardless of little days of darkness that hover over the scene. And the plain truth is, very few of the people who so glibly harangue are anything but empty little cast-offs from an antiquated army of "enlighteners." They will win out because there is nobody to oppose them.

American Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, cannot be indifferent to them and their dogmas. It is true that little can be hoped for from legislative enactments. Such enactments must always be the product of public opinion, not of religious opinion as such. They are aimed, moreover, at a tenable theory itself rather than at the method used to discuss that theory. Perhaps, were Protestants to agree upon a somewhat more intelligent attitude toward modern science than is sponsored by ultra-fundamentalism, some good might be done. But not all the harm would be undone thereby. Catholics may rejoice in the fact that an educational system, built up at great cost and through heroic sacrifice, largely safeguards their children from the comforts of materialism. But they know also that the day upon which Protestantism really dies in this country will be ominous indeed. This death could only add further to the strength of the "enlightenment" which is so contagious all about us. Our danger now lies in the influence for cynicism wielded by a myriad deserters from the ranks of faith—deserters whose romantic halos cater to the instinct for irreverence, carelessness, and denial. If those who feel that much contemporary whacking away at the limitations of Protestantism is doing good are in earnest, let them consider whether they should prefer to place their children in the company of a man who devoutly professes the Christian creed, with whatever narrow anarchies, or in the company of illuminati who have long since tossed the Bible and the Fathers into a handy waste-basket.

If the appendage of religion to the regular educational curriculum be merely a makeshift, something at least must come of it. The only thoroughgoing solution would be the establishment of a denominational school-system, within the limits of which each creed would be free to teach in its own way. Unfortunately, that cannot be thought of at present. Americans are still so largely under the spell of "public opinion" as the great energy which is to form the nation into something very new and beautiful, that nothing short of calamity could ever startle them out of the pose. Meanwhile, let Catholics and Protestants stand together, as they have done in many places, for the week-day religious school. It can guide a few people right. It may, in the end, even convince some parents that "historical and scientific facts" are not so completely on the side of cleverness as has so frequently been supposed. "Surely," said Cardinal Hayes, in an address advocating the coöperation of all faiths in giving religious instruction, "the American people do not intend to seal up the great Book of Revelation from their children.

The indifference of religion to such matters as scientific theory is impossible, for the simple reason that the bases of all philosophy, both Thomistic and modern, are scientific. And if it be the mission of philosophy to prepare the reason of man for the reception of grace, then the surrender of that mission by Christian thought would gravely belie the apostolic purpose which that thought is commissioned to upold. The tragedy of Protestantism is that long since it has acted practically upon Mr. Garrison's principle—that in lieu of philosophy it fostered contact with legislation, reliance upon public opinion, which must inevitably lead to death.

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WEEK BY WEEK

WHILE rumors were abounding that the relations between the governments of the United States and Mexico might change critically at any moment, the general press did a very notable thing. It took cognizance, almost for the first time, of the propaganda in which the resident Mexican consul-general has engaged—propaganda involving not merely the property rights now under discussion, but also the opposition of the Calles régime to religion. The activities of Señor Elias are more than a mere breach of courtesy; but if they were only that, they would have merited reproof long since. From a strictly Catholic point of view, however, it is probably well that they were not interfered with. Even the most "liberal" of Americans cannot contend that discussion of the Mexican situation was curtailed in any way. Everything that could be said for Calles was pamphleted abroad and launched under official insignia. The effect has undoubtedly been to bring more and more people into agreement with these words from a sermon delivered by Bishop Pascal Diaz, the exiled spokesman for the Mexican hierarchy, in New York City: "Remove the soul of a nation and it becomes stodgy, dull, without hope; and it soon dies. Mexico must not die. It must not lose the Church. You have heard of some physical suffering borne in my country. It is true there has been some, but this is as nothing to the suffering of those who are denied the right to worship God in the way to which they are accustomed." We must not forget that this "denied right" is the chief issue at stake in Mexico at the present time.

OUT of the turmoil in China comes the indication that the people of Confucius are, on the whole, really very calm. The destructive volatility of Europe is not in them. It is likely enough that few know what the varied armies are fighting about, and that still fewer care upon whose banners victory is to perch. The grim cohorts themselves appear to be helter-skelter, with extremely peculiar concepts of loyalty. It may very well be true, as one correspondent cabled his paper, that 10,000 sturdy occidental troops could put everything that China terms military out of commission in a few hours. All of this does not mean, however, that the business of expansion is going to be any easier in China than it has been. The immense oriental domain, where western methods are not in the least fashionable, has a habit of dissolving capital and business acumen as one chemical agent dissolves another. Imperialism is not the remedy for the social ills of China itself nor for the troubles of foreigners in the East. Christianity is: and who knows but that in years to come, native religious orders, a native priesthood and hierarchy, may develop a Catholic life as remarkable for mystical sanctity and social beneficence as were the middle-ages in Europe? To this possible development, neither the Chinese people themselves, nor the spirit of the missionaries, is a barrier. The great impediment is identification of Europe with commercial exploitation and paraded racial superiority. If the West were wise, it would see in Catholic Christianity the means which can some day make the Chinese a great creative people, bound by firm tenets of government—a people in whose hands investment would be secure and effort would thrive. It would postpone present wasteful schemes and pin its faith to the immemorial fact that culture of the soul always means, in the end, radiance of physical achievement.

SIMULTANEOUS with the announcement by Premier Poincaré of the intention of his government to pay $10,000,000 to the United States on June 15, as an instalment on the war debt, comes news of the completion by the customs commission of the Chamber of Deputies, of the new French tariff. This will have a very pronounced effect on American manufactured goods sold in France, which are estimated at a value of 2,000,000,000 francs a year. It looks very much as though, while moving to strengthen French credit in America, the shrewd prime minister is planning for concessions in any future debt-funding agreement based on possible modifications of the new import duties. Reports from Paris indicate that overtures may be expected in the near future, looking to the negotiation of a commercial treaty under the terms of which this country would receive most-favored-nation treatment. Hitherto, Washington has not shown any great anxiety to enter into conversations regarding commercial agreements, as the fear has been ever present that excuse would be given for opening up new avenues lead-

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ing inevitably to discussion of the debt settlement. Now, it is doubtless the hope of the French cabinet that pressure will be brought to bear by the large American manufacturing firms whose business is hard hit by the new tariff, and that France will be in an excellent position, if negotiations on trade are begun, to demand special consideration on matters altogether foreign to treaties of commerce. If this is the plan of French politicians, the situation is remarkable, in that Germany, the nation to fight whom the war debts were incurred, is the one which, operating under a temporary accord with France by which it has minimum schedule tariffs on hundreds of articles, is the country which benefits most by the tariff that is such a blow to American trade in France.

IN DISCUSSING, with remarkable restraint and admirable logic, the present situation in Russia, Alexander Feodorovitch Kerensky, who recently arrived in New York, made one remark which many Americans might ponder to advantage. If there is one thing that is proved by the present conditions of trade and labor under Soviet rule, he says, it is that governmental control of industry never can be successful. He believes that everything that would stimulate industry by giving greater individual opportunity, would at the same time weaken the hold of the Bolshevist leaders. "The well-being and wealth of the people and the existence of the Bolshevist dictatorship are things which cannot exist together," he declares. To those who have written of new opportunities which enable the worker to go to the opera, he makes answer that there is really nothing new in this; it is a system which was followed in minor degree under the czars—a system which, in giving a feeling of satisfaction, is psychologically attractive but fundamentally false. When sweat-shops are being operated, it will take more than a policy of little bread and occasional circuses to make those who are being sweated believe the reiterated declaration that they are free and equal to anyone else. Kerensky is certain that the lesson is being learned and that real liberty will yet come to Russia. The man has an abiding faith in democracy which neither his own expulsion nor the strange economic lapses of his countrymen can shake.

ANYBODY who has been encouraged by what The Spectator and other journals have affirmed regarding the fate of imperialism in China, may well take some instruction from the following reflections upon life on the Isle of Malta. They are quoted by the London News from the memoirs of an English professor whose subject was his native tongue. He had found himself up against a refractory Italianist class, and arrived at the conclusion (reinforced, no doubt, by sad experience) that British rule is almost too benevolent. "The Maltese say," he explains, "they have a 'cultural affinity' with Italy, and a preference for the Italian language. We admit the first, and respect the second. A highly-placed British official, in my time, actually learned Italian in order not to grate on the Italophile ear! Napoleon would have given the Italophile ear a sound French box, just as the Fascist Italians are doing to the Germanophile ear in the Tyrol." That is what one must term sound old-fashioned doctrine. Fancy the idea of a "highly-placed" official, in this bustling day and age, actually learning the language of the people over whose affairs he exercises dominion! The example of Napoleon and Fascism—not to mention a few names less foreign-sounding to a sensitive English ear—ought to convince anybody that something termed "self-determination" was all right when addressed to Central Europe, but all wrong in other geographical areas. Nevertheless, the professor called attention to the lustre which once again surrounds Malta as a bone of contention between great powers. Malta, once seized by Napoleon because of its strategical position in the Mediterranean, would serve Italy well as a naval base. The circles of history are erratic, but they are nevertheless round.

WHILE one group of senators, in the closing hours of the Sixty-ninth Congress, sought to suspend successive filibusters long enough to pass the Deficiency bill, and others strove to get a vote on the Public Buildings bill, J. Thomas Heflin, of Alabama, pounded steadily away at the Pope. He declared that Sir Esme Howard, the ambassador from Great Britain, was an agent of the Roman Pontiff who had been sent here from England because that country had fallen under the domination of the Catholic Church. His mission was to connive with the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic clergy in America to force this country into war with Mexico. He also issued a solemn warning that "it would be exceedingly dangerous to make Smith, a Catholic, President of the United States, with the Mexican situation what it is." Senator Walter E. Edge, of New Jersey, a Republican, seized the opportunity to pay a tribute to the New York governor; and Senator King, of Utah, a Democrat, defended Sir Esme as "a man of the highest attainments, fine intelligence, and honor as a diplomat." Having once more saved the country, Senator Heflin slept. Stretched on one of the leather-covered lounges in the rear of the chamber, he dreamed of the rewards of the just. A ribald fellow-senator consulted with a page and soon the terror of the College of Cardinals was swathed from head to foot in a portière of cardinal red—more proof for Alabama of the dastardly designs of the British ambassador and Governor Smith's trickery.

THE report on probation published by Mr. Edwin J. Cooley, embodying as it does the results of investigations carried on during two years by the Catholic Charities Probation Bureau, of New York City, is sure to have a permanent value. In the first place, it is almost the first endeavor to formulate a clear study of the possible points of contact between religion and

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those social or psychological circumstances which foster crime. The bureau has completed its work under the personal direction of Cardinal Hayes, and with the assistance of priests thoroughly familiar with urban conditions. Secondly, the investigators have all been men trained in the technique of social service and familiar with the light which modern science has thrown upon mental and neural processes. Thus there has been achieved a singularly helpful union of new practice with sacred tradition. If, then, the report concludes that the old theory of a "criminal type" must be discarded, and that society must get ready to deal with delinquents as "individuals," it has the right to expect that public opinion will endorse it and act accordingly. Mr. Cooley pays especial attention to the rôle of youth in crime, and quotes some alarming figures: "The majority of the most spectacular crimes bruited in the public press have been committed by mere youths. Of the inmates housed within Sing Sing prison, 45 percent are youths under twenty-five years of age. Youths from sixteen to twenty-five years constituted 46 percent of the persons convicted in the courts of record in New York State for the year ending October 31, 1925. Figures compiled by the United States Bureau of Census bring out the alarming fact that the arrests, convictions, and commitments in the prisons of the country reach their maximum in the age group of twenty-one to twenty-four." If this be not a warning written on the wall, it would be difficult to conceive of what such a thing might be.

THE steadily ascendant curve of education is now reaching the nation's adult population, and bids fair to initiate thousands of people long since weaned from school into the mysteries of "special courses," and "night sessions." The Federal Bureau of Education reports a constantly increasing demand for appropriate facilities to carry on the business of culture among those beyond the "compulsory age." Reports from Gary, Indiana, are said to indicate "that 16 2/3 percent of the entire adult population is attending afternoon or evening classes. Many of the young people in Gary are taking college subjects, showing clearly that if the right appeal is made, youth is anxious to secure an education. If all districts of the country secured proportionately as large an attendance as does Gary, we would have an evening school attendance of over 12,000,000." Such an attendance is, according to the bureau, very necessary, because almost twice twelve million Americans need "elementary education." No doubt, the greater leisure permitted by the contemporary American standard of living, stimulates the ambitions of the mind. It is salutary to note, however, that Gary, Indiana, is a city comprised almost entirely of what is termed a "foreign" population. People new to the opportunities afforded by this country appreciate them in a manner which makes the average native son look like a crusader for ignorance. In New York it is the youth who recently graduated from the East Side that wears out the benches in the city's free educational institutions. The children of the élite are tuning in on Paul Whiteman.

THE observance of Saint Patrick's day does not lose lustre as the great sacrificial aspects of Irish history grow more remote. It was, during many years, a "feast of the oppressed," celebrated in this country and in other free lands as a kind of solemn promise that wrongs, centuries old, would some day be righted; that the Celtic citadel would, God willing, fly its own flag. Today, Ireland is relatively free and confronts a new era of social development involving many difficult problems of economic and political readjustment. That these problems should encourage pessimism in a number of younger Irishmen is, perhaps, normal enough; but one is a little astonished to see that pessimism assume spiritual forms wholly alien to the deep, abiding religious genius of the race. In regard to it, Americans of Irish descent, gloriously conscious as they are of an illustrious tradition, appear to have a twofold duty—to aid the development of Ireland by practical encouragement, and to keep alive, more resolutely than ever, the spiritual flame of which Saint Patrick is so splendid a symbol. It was he who, with the aid of grace, transmuted a rich and reflective civilization into Christian culture at a moment when the fate of Europe depended upon the buttress of the Celtic soul. Today it is essential that his work, maimed for centuries, should be made whole once again—that Ireland, jewel in the ring of the history of the human soul, should bloom again in all its lustre so that faith may be seen and reverenced on all the shores of the world.

FRANCIS THOMPSON, to whom a memorial plaque was erected recently in the city of his birth, seems to be gaining a constantly firmer hold on the American reading public. We note that Saint Lawrence College, a Wisconsin foundation, and the oldest educational institution conducted by the Capuchin order in the United States, has been given the original manuscript of Thompson's Franciscus Christificatus. This is, so far as we know, the only one of the poet's autograph lyrics to have come to this country; and with it is connected an interesting history. At Pantasaph, the Capuchin monastery in Wales to which Thompson retired toward the close of his life for a lengthy stay, he met Father Anselm, who later on was consecrated Archbishop of Simla, India. The two became fast friends; and we doubt if there is a man now living who could supply more succinct personal information about the author of The Hound of Heaven than this missionary archbishop. It was he who presented the manuscript to his American Capuchin friends. How curious that it should have traveled from quiet England to distant India, and then back again to the United States! Perhaps Americans generally, remote as they are from the intense faith of the poet, are destined to come into contact with his

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mysticism in much the same way. We need not consider it impossible that contemporary delving into oriental philosophies, involving though it does a retreat from European tradition, may in the end bring many around to a reverent examination of that doctrine which Francis Thompson interpreted so beautifully in English.

THE loneliness of prophets is proverbial; but it is brought to attention once again in connection with some correspondence of René Descartes, the great French thinker, which a young British scholar has just unearthed and published. Primarily, these letters of long ago deal with Descartes as a great mathematician; but here and there the human being gleams through, faithful to an immemorial type and yet strangely modern. "If," he wrote in one place, "certain Indians have refused to become Christians on the ground that they were afraid to go to the Spanish paradise, I am even more reasonable in wishing that religion can give me the hope of dwelling, after this life, with citizens of those countries which I much prefer to my own." Appearances sometimes lead us to believe that America fosters this feeling of contempt for social and civic environment more strongly than any other land. Our poetic temperaments are forever stamping their feet over the grossness of the neighborhood and shouting for Timbuctoo. But the explanation is probably that we have not more of the "noble modern isolation of soul," but more ability to create a disturbance. The great French haters never stopped to think that their country possessed a delightfully varied imperial scene; they simply remained in Paris and grumbled fervently. By comparison, America has an equally diversified and conceivably more soothing resource. It can always drop over to Europe and proceed to admire that country which it most profoundly misunderstands.

ONE is glad to see a great many things well said in Mr. Sidney Dark's recently published little monograph on Queen Elizabeth (George H. Doran Company). Time was when a theme like this could hardly be dealt with dispassionately, or come trailing anything but clouds of historical nonsense. Mr. Dark says that "Puritanism was at once to increase the irreligion of the mass of the people, by teaching that religion was intimately associated with gloom and hypocrisy, and to destroy the new and short-lived idea of kingship that was unknown in England before the Reformation. It was from Luther, even more than from Machiavelli, that the Tudors conceived the idea of the divine right of kings which they bequeathed to the Stuarts to their undoing." Of social conditions during the Elizabethan era, he avers: "The condition of the common people, miserable enough when Elizabeth ascended the throne, had considerably improved at her death, though it must have been a far happier thing to have been an English peasant or an English craftsman in the year 1500 than it was in the year 1600. Gone were the Trade Guilds, founded on brotherhood and the sonship of God, that made for good cheer and good work, and emphasized the essential nobility of craftsmanship. Gone were the monks and the monasteries with their almost endless beneficence. On the roads of England were hundreds of vagrants whom no man would hire, and who had nowhere to lay their heads." It is also a pleasure that Lord Acton's authority is appealed to frequently, especially in connection with the Council of Trent. We have always felt that his scholarship, as firmly impartial as Lingard's, would some day have a great effect even upon popular conceptions of history.

EVERYBODY is familiar with the terms, "volts" and "voltage," and it may be assumed that most people are aware that they refer to the unit of electro-motive force, and that it gets its name from an abbreviation of that of Alessandro Volta, the discoverer of the electrical pile, which Arago said was the most wonderful instrument, not excepting the telescope or the steam-engine, which had ever come from the hand of man. Volta died in 1827, and this year is the centenary of his death. Preparations for its celebration are on foot in various scientific quarters. Volta was a Catholic of singular piety, in the latter part of his life not merely hearing Mass daily, but usually assisting at the recitation of the Office by the Canons of the Cathedral of Como. Fearing lest there might be any doubt as to his beliefs, he left behind him a long religious testament, in which he states that he has "always held, and hold now, the holy Catholic religion as the only true and infallible one, thanking without end the good God for having gifted me with such a faith." Volta was one of a brilliant group of Catholics whose names are now imperishably associated with the science of electricity—Galvani, Ampère, Coulomb, and Ohm.

THE MYSTICAL PATHWAY

IN DECLARING Saint John of the Cross a "mystical doctor," the Church has drawn attention in an especial manner to an example much needed by the contemporary era. Although the lofty doctrine and asceticism of the Spanish master may not be within the reach of all who are sincerely concerned with mystical experience, he can be a guide and a source of encouragement to the most humble and sorely tried. A Belgian scholar has pointed out how closely the Spanish doctor resembles Saint Francis de Sales: "the fundamentals of their teachings are the same, although what is inflexible logic in the first becomes persuasion in the second." Both, the patron of literary men and the patron of mystics, proved in what manner and with what comforting certainty the gross, limited ambitions of human selfishness could be overcome for the sake of living wholly for the beautiful wisdom of God. Moreover, both laid down a method which anybody who earnestly cares to do so can follow—if he have the necessary courage and purposiveness.

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It is a curious fact that Saint John of the Cross has always exerted a very strong influence upon artists. If we pass by the many European writers who, like Huysmans, wove his images and experiences with their own, and confine our attention to English letters, we shall discover what is really a surprising fact—that he has influenced more writing in our language than all other Spanish literature combined. Richard Crashaw, Coventry Patmore, Francis Thompson, and Arthur Symons were diligent readers of his books, and many lesser men caught something of his radiance. To a considerable extent, this influence can be accounted for, of course, by the wonderful literary form into which the work of Saint John of the Cross is cast. His imagery and other imaginative resources stamp him as one of the supreme poets; and it is said by competent critics that his use of the Castilian tongue is exquisite and exemplary. In a large measure, his great books are poems, to which there is added an extensive commentary. Moreover, we know that the saint was, as a young man, a diligent student of letters, in particular of the Latin writers. Saint Teresa refers to him as "the little Seneca"—a reference based no less, it is said, upon his scholarship than upon his fondness for the maxims of the Roman philosopher. He is part and parcel of the renaissance; and indeed it is hardly possible to comprehend that period without seeing him as a figure in its story.

Saint John of the Cross averred that he knew nothing except God. Consciousness of Divine love, as he achieved it through steadfast mastery of the senses and all desire, is a thing which most of us cannot quite comprehend. But we may struggle toward it, and feel its beneficence a little—the calm which contrasts so starkly with the material turmoil of the modern world, its struggle with things and its unsatisfactory surrender to itself. About it and Saint John of the Cross there will be much more to say during the coming year and after. This present note can only be a notice of his elevation to the rank of mystical doctor and of his notable human significance.

CONGRESS ADJOURNS

IT IS likely that the Sixty-ninth Congress will be remembered, not by what it finished, but by what it started. Its record of accomplishment was somewhat meagre, the one outstanding bill which received the approval of both branches having been promptly vetoed by the President with an analysis of the measure which was convincingly conclusive. A dozen other matters of importance went into the docket of unfinished business as a result of the filibusters which blocked all action in the Senate in the last days of the session. There have been filibusters in this august body before, but seldom have tactics of obstruction been employed in a manner to arrest and hold public notice as they were at the end of the Congress which strangled itself to death on March 4.

The determination of Senator David A. Reed of Pennsylvania to hold up all other business on which the Senate desired to take action rather than permit that body to vote on the resolution to extend the powers of the committee headed by Senator James A. Reed of Missouri, which has been investigating corruption in senatorial elections, immediately focused attention on a subject of more national importance than any of the measures which were side-tracked by his stubbornness. If additional evidence were needed of the importance of the work undertaken by the investigating committee, it was furnished by this frantic effort of a senator from a state where wide-spread corruption is charged, to head off further inquiry.

Enough has been disclosed by the persistence of the Missouri senator at the hearings of the committee already held to demonstrate that a thorough investigation is imperatively necessary. The chairman has had no easy task; he has had to deal with recalcitrant witnesses, he has had to endure sneers at his motives and the charge that he was serving his ambition as a candidate for his party's nomination for the Presidency by prosecuting the inquiry. To this last charge the bulk of his fellow-citizens will answer for him: if the Missourian has shown that he has done his part to purify the politics of his country, any enhancement of his prospects as a servant of the people in higher office has been most properly earned. The struggle of his namesake from Pennsylvania to curtail his endeavors can only have increased his prestige.

In all the turmoil of the last days of the session, one figure loomed serene and satisfied. Vice-President Dawes was in a position to point to proof of all he has maintained concerning the need of reform in the rules of the Senate. Nor did he allow the opportunity to pass. When, in a moment of exasperation, Senator Walsh of Massachusetts exclaimed: "I will not act under duress. Massachusetts has a right to her vote in this Senate and she cannot be coerced by a combination of Pennsylvania and New Hampshire. Sooner or later, this Senate must become a legislative body"—the presiding officer remarked suavely, to a roar of laughter from the galleries: "The chair agrees with that."

Later on, when ending the session, the Vice-President declared that the conditions under which it closed were due "to defective rules of the Senate, under which a minority can prevent a majority from exercising their right to bring measures to a vote. It is the only great parliamentary body in the world where such a situation exists."

There was a time, when Mr. Dawes first launched his campaign for reform of the rules, when the issue he raised was not taken seriously. There can be little doubt that the object-lesson given by the filibusters of the Sixty-ninth Congress will make it a very real issue when the Vice-President again takes the stump, and will be the means of making its champion loom larger than ever as a national figure.

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THE DAWN OF THE GOLDEN DAY

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

ALTHOUGH I have read only one book by Mr. Lewis Mumford, I feel no hesitancy in saying that he is one of the few American authors who really matter. There are authors who can be judged by the quality rather than by the quantity or the popularity of their work, and Mr. Mumford is such a one. The book I have read follows a book dealing with the story of Utopias—the curious history of man's many dreams of a world made perfect for human life; and another book dealing with the American experiment in civilization through a more particular examination of America's architecture. One does not need to have read these two books (though doubtless they are well worth reading) to know that they manifest three qualities that are strikingly combined in the third book,* now under consideration.

The first quality is a powerful, persistent interest in ideals, even in vague dreams of ideals, of human perfectibility here and now—dreams of the earthly paradise; the second is an equally strong and durable interest in the material, the social, the actual conditions of human life seen in relation to human ideals; the third quality is the focusing of the two other qualities upon the study of American life: its achievements, its failures, its errors, its hopes and prospects.

Even had I not read anything of Mr. Mumford's, I would still be certain that he was a very important figure. When two such men as George Santayana and Van Wyck Brooks praise a writer in terms vibrant with enthusiasm as well as illuminated with judgment, we may be assured that we shall not waste our time in paying some attention to his work. Neither Mr. Santayana nor Mr. Brooks takes any part in blowing blasts of those brazen (or dulcet) bugles of blurbing which today keep the puppets of publicity dancing to the tunes arranged by publishers' claques. Both men still believe in addressing themselves to the intelligence of their readers; both have worked with ardent and lucid patience to keep the lamp of reason alight in the troubled atmosphere of American letters. And so does Mr. Mumford.

Mr. Brooks thinks that Mr. Mumford's book is "the culmination of the whole critical movement in this country during the last ten years—the most brilliant book the movement has produced thus far and the one that bests sums up its leading ideas." We know that Mr. Brooks has been one of the leaders of this critical movement, one, indeed, of its creators; nobody has a juster title to be regarded as one of the judges of its results.

As for Mr. Santayana, he is even more emphatic than Mr. Brooks. He says that Mr. Mumford's work "is the best book about America, if not the best American book, that I have ever read."

Two such opinions, uttered by two such authorities, almost dispense us from further examination of The Golden Day. A lesser critic, knowing how well he may rely upon the verdict of two such sound judges of literature, might be tempted simply to write: "I concur —for what my own opinion may be worth, I agree that Mr. Mumford's book is what they say it is; I simply advise my own readers to read it, and thereby profit." So I do, up to a certain point; so I do, with one reservation; but because I believe that the point at which something should be said that is not praise, but a deep regret, and because the reservation to be made is, it seems to me, of fundamental importance, I propose to add a few words to the chorus of high and merited praise given to The Golden Day.

Mr. Santayana, in the letter which contained the very remarkable tribute to Mr. Mumford which I have quoted above, has, indeed, anticipated the point I have in mind, the reservation I propose to make; but he only does so in relation to what Mr. Mumford says about Mr. Santayana, as a corrective to Mr. Mumford's views about Mr. Santayana; but they have a far wider and deeper application. I quote from Mr. Santayana's letter to Mr. Mumford:

> In the very complimentary notice, in quality and quantity, which you take of me in your book, I feel that you are thinking of me—quite naturally—as just a Harvard professor, author of a book called The Life of Reason. Your appreciation seems absolutely just, as directed upon that semi-public personage; but I never felt myself to be identical with that being, and now much less than ever. What you say about my roots being at best in Mrs. Gardner's Boston, is true of him, not of me; my own roots are Catholic and Spanish, and though they remain underground, perhaps, they are the life of everything; for instance, of my pose as a superior and lackadaisical person; because all the people and opinions which I deal with and try to understand, are foreign and heretical and transitory from the point of view of the great tradition to which I belong.

The manner in which Mr. Santayana's criticism applies not merely to Mr. Mumford's views of Mr. Santayana, but much more fundamentally to Mr. Mumford's views of American life and culture can only be made clear by turning to Mr. Mumford's book, in order to find out just what these views are. Now, Mr. Mumford's views are so painstakingly expressed, they are so amply, and so beautifully, illustrated by his studies of the European foundation and background of American life, of the psychology of the American pio-

**The Golden Day: A Study in American Experience and Culture, by Lewis Mumford. New York: Boni and Liveright. $2.50.*

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neer, of the arrival and the results of the industrial revolution, of Puritanism, of Emerson, Melville, Twain, and other writers, that it is very difficult to epitomize them justly.

While it is one of the greatest merits of Mr. Mumford's book that it talks to the mind, that it is intellectual without being pedantic or limited too strictly to intellectual values, at the same time it is a work of art; it has the atmosphere of an individual's personality; it has the mood induced by all good writing—a mood akin to that produced by music, a mood in which something intuitively transcendental seems to mingle with the pleasure or the interest aroused in us by the mathematics of music—and Mr. Mumford has the right to be judged by the effect of his book as a book, as a whole thing, rather than by a précis, no matter how apparently accurate, of its main ideas. Nevertheless, even were I competent for the task, I cannot write a book about Mr. Mumford's book; in these pages I can only do my best to give a brief outline of what those main ideas seem to be, and how they seem to miss the main idea of all.

I think, then, it may be said that first of all, and justly, Mr. Mumford lays down and establishes the thesis that it is from Europe's unsettlement that the settlement of America sprang. "The dissociation, the displacement, and, finally, the disintegration of European culture became most apparent in the new world: but the process itself began in Europe, and the interests that eventually dominated the American scene all had their origin in the old world," says Mr. Mumford. "The Protestant, the inventor, the politician, the explorer, the restless delocalized man—all these types appeared in Europe before they rallied together to form the composite America," he goes on to say; and it is to these types that he attributes all that has been unsatisfactory, even baneful, in American culture and life. And also, as the qualities in these types that were responsible for things unsatisfactory or evil (socially and culturally speaking) were cured or modified, that "something of value was created" to take the place of "something of value" that "disappeared with the colonization of America."

At the end of his book, Mr. Mumford celebrates the beauty and the high value of this "something" in a vein of prophetic exultation—the exultation of hope, at least, if not precisely of realization. What that "something" is remains, however, more than a little vague. Mr. Mumford is far more precise in his analysis than in his synthesis. He can separate and describe the principal factors of his problem admirably (except for the one great factor which, I repeat, he misses entirely) particularly in criticizing the deficiencies and the faults of American life; but the landscape of the future, or even a map of it, he shows only as a rosy blur of humanistic optimism. Perhaps that is the best vision a prophet may be able to achieve. If a man tells you that he hopes for the best, only a very disgruntled pessimist would be inclined to growl at him. All the same, even an optimist might, without being open to a charge of cruelty, or lack of sympathy, ask him to tell us what it is he deems to be the best. So far as this book is concerned, Mr. Mumford would leave such a question unanswered, save for a hint or two. And if I am correct in my interpretation of the hints, I, for one, would be obliged to comment that "the best," as imagined by Mr. Mumford, is not nearly good enough. It would not be good enough because it would not be true enough, even if we were ever to have it. At best, it would be a phase, not a solution—a pleasant pause, but not the end of the journey of man.

But to return from Mr. Mumford's vision of the future to his picture of the past and of the present, let us sketch his thesis a little more fully. Particularly insistent is his opinion, over and over repeated, that the breakdown of European culture, the dissolution of all the spiritual, moral, philosophical principles that had molded and directed that culture, was complete and final, and that it was from a chaos that the dissociated and inharmonious elements which explored, settled, and civilized America—or, at any rate, the United States—proceeded. Hence, all the ugly, mean, sordid conditions which mar American life or culture were produced because of the inherent lack of an organic set of principles, or ideas, on the part of the Protestant, pioneering, political, materialistic, profiteering settlers and colonists and their descendants. Hence, also, the strenuous, persistent efforts of their better, nobler representatives; of their poets and artists; of the higher but undirected instincts, or desires, of their own selves, to resolve the lack of harmony of their lives and culture, and to achieve a new, and nobler, synthesis—to find a greater culture than any of the past. In this effort Mr. Mumford recognizes the greatness of America. In this sense, America might save, not only its own soul, but that of Europe—the distracted mother from whom she fled into the wilderness.

In a score of passages Mr. Mumford reiterates his belief in the total loss of the culture which once had unified and vivified European life and culture:

> In the thirteenth century, the European heritage of mediaeval culture was still intact. By the end of the seventeenth it had become only a heap of fragments. . . . The beliefs and symbols of the Christian Church had guided men, and partly modified their activities for, roughly, a thousand years. Then, one by one, they began to crack; one by one they ceased to be real or interesting; and gradually the dream that held them all together started to dissolve. When the process ceased, the united order of Christendom had become an array of independent and sovereign states, and the Church itself had divided up into a host of repellent sects.

A score of such passages might be quoted. Mr. Mumford's definition of the guiding principle of the mediaeval Christian ethos is just and well expressed:

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> Over the daily life lay a whole tissue of meanings, derived from the Christian belief in eternity: the notion that existence was not a biological activity, but a period of moral probation; the notion of an intermediate hierarchy of human beings (the priesthood) that connected the lowest sinner with the august Ruler of Heaven; the idea that life was significant only on condition that it was prolonged, in beatitude or despair, into the next world.

It is, of course, an outside view; it is partial and incomplete, but it serves its purpose fairly well. Men who look forward to an endless life will certainly not take the same view of earthly life as men who care only for this world and its life. So, as Protestantism passed more and more away from the central energy of Christian ideas, and more and more broke up and separated into increasingly individualistic cults, and then was displaced by the cult of individualism itself; and as industrialism married materialism and begot proletarianism, there was, according to Mr. Mumford, no force left to oppose the inevitable disaster which menaced mankind, save as he indicates in his last chapter —the revolt of man against the new notions of mere materialism in science and government, art and culture generally, and the creation by man himself, "of a new world, . . . a philosophy which shall be as completely oriented toward Life as the dominant thought since Descartes has been directed toward the Machine."

What Mr. Mumford, of course, ignores; what, rather, he does not even see, is the fact, plain as sunlight, that there was no such complete disappearance of Catholic Christianity as he assumes to be the case.

What Mr. Santayana wrote about himself might be paraphrased so as to apply to Mr. Mumford's general views as well as to his particular view of Mr. Santayana, thus (I crave Mr. Santayana's pardon for tinkering with his lucid prose):

What you (Mr. Mumford) say about the roots of distracted, materialistic America being at best in the uprooted soil of a distracted, dissociated Europe—the post-Reformation Europe—is true in part; but the main roots of European, and therefore, of American life, are Catholic, and though they remain underground, perhaps, they are the life of everything . . . and all the people and opinions and conditions which you deal with and try to understand are heretical and transitory from the point of view of the great tradition and greater life of Catholicism.

In a word, the chief value of a book like Mr. Mumford's is something like the chief value of such cruder work as Mr. H. L. Mencken's; namely, it clearly exhibits the failure of things heretical and transitory; of Protestantism, materialistic science, industrialism; and also of vaguely idealistic humanism. It helps, as all such work will help, to clear the air, and to clear the ground, for the action of that which is not heretical, but true; not transitory, but permanent—Catholicism. The Church did not die at any of the dates inscribed more or less eloquently on tombstones above empty graves, by so many of the writers of its obituaries; the Church set its mark on America long before the distracted refugees from a chaotic Europe arrived upon the scene; the Church's norm of culture and of life remains, after all experiments have failed. When, and only when we apply it, will society find its equilibrium again. Then, perhaps, we shall know the Golden Day. Its dawn is already visible.

MYSTIC AND MAN OF AFFAIRS

By HENRY MORTON ROBINSON

POET and diplomat, dramatist and metaphysician, mystic and man of affairs—these are the apparently conflicting terms of the equation that is Paul Claudel, the new ambassador from France to the United States. Amid the whirring responsibilities of international affairs in China, Italy, Brazil, Germany and Japan, Paul Claudel has led what seems at first glance to be a dual existence, the elements of which would threaten the happiness, or even the sanity, of a character less perfectly integrated. At no time in his life has he enjoyed the privilege of clear literary leisure, yet in volume alone his productivity equals that of any great contemporary. Ten dramas, nine volumes of poetry, translations of Aeschylus and Coventry Patmore, a philosophical treatise on the Art of Poetry, and an uncollected mass of periodical literature are the fruits of a career devoted on the one side to the French diplomatic and consular service, and on the other to a lyric demonstration of the human soul. His brilliant diplomatic gifts are acknowledged—he knows how the world runs, and what makes it go. Yet, if one were to casually examine a volume of his poetry, without previous knowledge of the author, the first comment would be: "Here is a meditative mystic, recording his visions in the solitude of a monastic cell." The ecstasy of the inspired recluse, the fervor of the illumined soul, are seen on every page. What miracle enables this poet, spending himself generously in the thousand contacts of daily affairs, to preserve for lyric utterance the pure language of the spirit? What inner unity makes possible a life of such diverse accomplishment? To attempt a solution of these questions it is necessary to glance backward forty years to a time when the young Claudel was emerging from adolescence into a world of frenzied negation and sceptic unbelief.

Born in Villeneuve-sur-Fère on August 8, 1868, Paul Claudel studied law at the Lycée de Louis-le-Grand in Paris, and found himself at the age of eighteen pro-

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jected into the mechanistic and scientifically formularized universe of the 'eighties. Renan ruled and Montaigne was a deity. The world of art, science, and literature was violently irreligious, and the young Claudel, as one of the enlightened minority, set up for a thoroughgoing agnostic. He believed, if indeed he believed anything, that somehow the mathematical laws of nature would speedily exert an influence on art and society, and that the millennium of high rationalism was imminent on the morrow. Yet even this much-discussed and long-awaited millennium seemed a bit boring, and on the whole rather pitiful to a young man who, like Augustine, was awaiting a teacher who would illuminate the black void, and an event that would give savor to a flat and unprofitable world-machine. Teacher and event arrived almost at the same moment: the master was Arthur Rimbaud, the "inventor of vers libre" and a tremendous spiritual force in Claudel's life; and the great event was a conversion to Catholicism, as swiftly dramatic as any mystical experience ever recorded in Christian history.

On Christmas day, 1886, Paul Claudel entered the Church of Notre Dame in Paris, "simply through curiosity, seeking in the Catholic ceremonies the appropriate excitant and material for some studies in decadency. . . . Then befell an event that has influenced my whole life. I suddenly experienced a devastating knowledge of innocence, and of the eternal childhood of God. In an instant my heart was pierced, and I believed. I believed with such adhesive force, with so complete a surrender of my entire being, with a conviction so powerful, and with a certainty leaving no room for any species of doubt—that ever since, all the books, all the reasonings, and all the hazards of a much-agitated life, have not been able to shake my faith, no, nor even touch it."

Having penetrated at a stroke to the centre of reality, Paul Claudel now abandoned the old myths of "science," and erected a metaphysic based wholly upon faith. He joyously perceived that mathematical formulas and "natural agents" could never explain for him the interior genesis of forms which are forever renewing the glory of the world. His concern henceforth was to be with this inner reality, and from the first his poetry deals wholly with this theme. It is significant, also, to note that his utterance as a poet dates from the time of his mystical experience in Notre Dame, and that the road of faith was for Claudel the way of poetry. Both his lyric and dramatic pieces are passionately motivated by a sense of God's reality in a world of external shadows, signs, and symbols. These symbols are manifestations of the operant will of God. In Magnificat, the poet chants his liberation from the bondage of "ideas":

> My soul doth magnify the Lord, Who has delivered me from Idols
>
> And Who has ordained that I adore Him alone, and not Isis nor Osiris,
>
> Nor Justice, nor Progress, nor Truth, nor Divinity, nor Humanity, or the Laws of Nature, nor Art, nor Beauty. . . .
>
> Lord, You have delivered me from books and Ideas, from Idols and their preachers.

Claudel is convinced of the innate stability of God in a world of evolution and change. And this conception of the static puissance of God in the midst of His created things, is, I believe, the clue to Paul Claudel's character. Under the solvent of this conception all things melt into their ultimate strata of importance, to achieve a daring kind of unity. And this unity of perfect faith has enabled Paul Claudel to participate actively in the affairs of a shifting, vertiginous world, ever keeping in mind the world's central Reason, its one God. He exclaims:

> I accept the world as it is, and I would alter nothing, Lord, give me Thyself and I am well content.

By temperament robust and perfectly balanced, Claudel has accepted life as he finds it. His tower of values is rooted in terrestrial rock, but no man except Claudel himself can say what the cloud-washed battlements reveal.

Paul Claudel is the regenerator of Catholic poetry in France, and has healed the century-old schism, if not between faith and science, then certainly between faith and imagination. He has given a new lustre to Francis Thompson's truth that the Church is the mother of poets. And he has done this by rediscovering the soul as a legitimate subject of poetry, placing it first among the concerns of the poet. Since the renaissance, the aesthetic expression of Europe and America has been almost completely pagan, devoted to the portrayal of merely sensual existences. Of late years, it has turned its attention to a clinical discussion of the emotional ganglia, seeking to find in the microscopic analyses of cell and neuron material of literary and aesthetic importance. Claudel changes all this. His dominant interest is found in the relations of the human soul with its Creator. Recognition, sacrifice, surrender, and despair—the most harrowing and permanent emotions of the soul are reflected in Claudel's art as the incessant drama between God and the individual. The character of Violaine in The Tidings Brought to Mary is a penetrating study of the sacrificial impulse, operating on a sensitive soul. And in Corona Bénigatitis the poet anatomizes the experiences of mystical love, in language that has no parallel in English, and must of necessity be compared to the exclamations of Saint Teresa or the Canticles of Saint Francis.

Yet this preoccupation with the soul does not prevent Paul Claudel from devoting a large share of his poetic energy to the praise and demonstration of the world of nature. Such is his passion for the physical appearances of things, that he has been accused by hostile critics of the very paganism he wishes to avoid. "The poetry of Paul Claudel," says M. Mounet,

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"though mystical in intention, is pagan in fact." Such criticism is only partially deserved. Claudel perceives the world of sensation with such sharp and thirsty joy, and asserts its beauty so positively that the reader is sometimes inundated by floods of sensuous imagery. But this is a trait of all highly-charged poetry, which, seeking to avoid vague abstractions, in the very superabundance of its energy becomes richly freighted with sensuous metaphors. And if the poet clogs his vision with color, and drowns the inner ear with sound, the result is fatal. But with Claudel the hierarchy of values is preserved; his contours, though sometimes luxuriously Gothic, climb straight up to the flèche of emotion. For him, the figure is merely the symbol and interpreter of the spirit, valuable because it intensifies the wonder of the poet and renders it more poignant to the reader.

Paul Claudel is not a poetic loiterer, delighting in the arabesque for its own sake, nor much addicted to pressing his aching temples for the "mot juste." He is the poet of grand effects, a painter of ensembles, a creator of superbly synthetic power. His glance appraises the entire subject; he starts for his goal at a gallop, dragging language and reader after him by sheer force of conviction. He disdains the nuance, is impatient of analysis, and is concerned not at all with conscious style. Envisioning the relationship between the elements of his poem, he sweeps onward like a dithyrambic wave, gaining fresh strength at every breath, and washes at last over the highest cliffs of poetic emotion—cliffs that have daunted more meticulous poets, or cast them, shrieking, into the churning trough of language. In the achieving of grand totalities, Paul Claudel is the most highly successful of modern poets.

At this point it seems appropriate to mention Claudel's technical debt to Arthur Rimbaud. Rimbaud was one of the most savagely original spirits in French literary history. It was Rimbaud who discovered the color of vowels in his famous vowel sonnet; who first suggested that a limpid style was of necessity a superficial one—and that a profound subject could not be sincerely treated in a luminous manner so fashionable in the French tradition. Rimbaud, as we have noted, was also the first modern to break away from the old classic metres, on the ground that they compelled the poet to a rigid artificiality of thought and diction. He was the first "symbolist" and is generally credited with having introduced free verse into modern poetry. It was this man, who, at the height of his fame, powerfully fascinated the young Claudel. "I owe everything to Rimbaud," says Claudel. "Others have instructed me, but this man constructed me." The younger poet adopted the theories of his teacher, and practised them in his own art. But not without modifications, important and original. Claudel discovered that there is a rising inflection of the human voice toward the middle of any spoken phrase, and a falling away at the end of a sentence, in correspondence with the exhaustion of the breath. This gave rise to his famous "respiratory theory," which he has adapted to the stage, and has employed in all his lyric pieces. His dramatic characters speak in a series of waves, the verses following as closely as possible the natural inflections of the human voice.

The inevitable result is a surprising increase in dignity and effectiveness. Most of the lyrics are cast in flowing distichs, with loose internal rhythms that fall into elusive patterns, and terminate either in assonance or rhymes. The hymns and prayers in Corona Bénigatitis are cast in large Gregorian rhythms that blow them grandly forward. It would be impossible to achieve in clipped and regular verse the sonorous and rebounding music of this mediaeval poetry. All of Claudel's work abounds in biblical and archaic locutions. "His syntax," writes Mme. Ste. Marie Perrin, "is justifiable but strange." That this strangeness exists, cannot be denied. But it is the strangeness of Isaiah and of the Apocalypse. Any colloquializing or "correcting" of vocabulary and diction would be treacherous to the essence of Claudel's poetry, and fatal to its beauty.

One cannot walk far afield in the realm of contemporary culture without coming into contact with the personality of Paul Claudel. In a world abandoned to perpetual motion and tinted ephemera he juts out like a challenging ledge of eternal stone. Merely by his presence we are reinvigorated and restored. In his life and poetry he has leveled down to the stern foundations of faith; he has reclaimed the soul for art; and in an age of diluted emotion he has dared to speak out passionately. One realizes that he has intensely lived his poems, that he is not a "literary mystic" nor a monger of sibylline phrases. If Paul Claudel never writes another verse he is already assured of a place just below the very greatest of our Catholic poets of all time. John of the Cross, Henry Vaughn, and Francis Thompson are of his fellowship.

Poet and diplomat, mystic and man of affairs, Paul Claudel presents a phenomenon for which we are grateful, and offers an enigma that no amount of critical rationalizing can ever hope to solve satisfactorily.

These Are the Kings of Judah

(*Port-Sud, Chartres Cathedral*)

These are the queens of Judah and their kings,
Their cerements wrapped round them like furled wings;
Their eyes are gentle, set in steadfast gaze;
Their hands are folded in the guise of praise;
Upon their lips has lain the breath of prayer;
Worship is woven in their twisted hair;
Upon their strength a great cathedral leans . . .
These are the kings of Judah and their queens.

ELSPETH GIVENS.

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NEEDED: A MORAL HOUSECLEANING

By ELISABETH MARBURY

I HAVE been frequently asked to give my opinion as to the most direct method of cleaning up the theatre, and I have not hesitated to answer that the only practical expedient is to appoint an official licenser in whom will be vested the power to determine as to the fitness of each and every manuscript which will be submitted.

No play could then be produced without a license; therefore, if it were not proper to be produced, it would not be proper enough to be licensed. This would avoid all publicity and all delay. There would then be no necessity of a jury; there would be no interference by the police; and there would be no procrastination due to legal delays. The author and the producer would be heavily fined, and perhaps imprisoned, should they venture to produce a play for which a license had been refused.

If the manuscript, when presented to the licenser, contained merely objectionable passages which could either be eliminated or modified, the author would be given the opportunity of revising his play, and of submitting it again before the license were definitely refused. Only in such cases as when the text and treatment were utterly prohibitory and salacious would a license be definitely refused. This course of procedure is very simple and is operating successfully in London, Boston, and Philadelphia; thus there is no valid reason why this same experiment should not be made in New York.

Under the able guidance of Mr. Will Hays, the moving-picture industry has been morally benefited, and we have grown accustomed to seeing each film now presented bear its license number. There is, so far as I can see, no real objection to finding a second Will Hays for plays. Any opposition to this plan springs, I fancy, from groups who enjoy the importance of forming themselves into committees and of apparently becoming well-advertised guardians of public morals. It is a very common form of vanity, that of courting newspaper publicity. Evidently this is not the country nor the era when the quiet worker in God's vineyard is easy to find.

While there is little doubt of the need of some immediate and drastic restraint so far as the stage of today is concerned, nevertheless, as I have said both through the spoken and the written word, the influences which are the undercurrents of these salacious performances are to be found primarily in the homes. I shall not refer to parents who possess no religious belief, but I particularly wish to ask Catholic fathers and mothers what they intend to do to restrain the conditions which have been springing up. Since when has the Church sanctioned the utter liberty of conduct which now prevails—since when have parents been encouraged to let their children do as they please—and since when have they been excused from all sense of personal responsibility in the upbringing of their boys and girls?

I do not write in any carping or reactionary spirit. I am old, but my brain is not obsolete. It is because I do keep up with the times, because I am always in contact with "flaming youth"; it is because I go out in the world that I know what is going on and whereof I speak. If, in my remarks, I make any statements which cannot be proven accurate, I admit the right of challenge; otherwise I trust that those who may read what I have to say will at least be honest with themselves.

The more obnoxious the play, the more one sees the matinées full of young girls from sixteen to twenty years of age. Presumably some of these, at least, are Catholics, educated in Catholic schools and colleges. What has attracted them to these particularly offensive dramatic offerings which have been "written up," which have been condemned or defended at length in the public press? Is it not safe to assume that they, as well as their parents, know what they go to see? They do not buy their tickets either inadvertently or ignorantly, yet there they are in the audience, listening to language that is foul, following a theme which is perverted and revolting, and watching gestures which have but one purpose and one meaning.

They are there to be steeped in what is commonly known as "sex appeal"; they are there to learn more of those influences against which they have always been warned by the Church to which they belong. They are there to listen to prurient speech and to become used to flippant familiarity with vice which is one means of gratifying a vulgar curiosity. If the parents are asked why they permit their children to attend plays of this character they invariably use the now familiar slogan: "What can I do? If I say anything I am told that I am old-fashioned." Was there ever a more shallow argument? Is to be "old-fashioned" of greater importance than to sit by, supinely allowing a child's unformed character and limited intelligence to dictate the outgoings and incomings of his or her life without either let or hindrance? If the young person is sent to a proper school the responsibility of the parents seems now to stop at its threshold. Latch keys and license establish the new order, while these same parents sleep quietly in their beds, undisturbed by the fact that the young people of their family are running wild from one cabaret to another, drinking highballs and cocktails ad lib., and dancing the most vulgar of all modern dances with men they scarcely know or whom they have just casually run across.

The undesirable plays are merely the natural devel-

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opment of the tendencies of the day. We see the same letting down of moral standards in literature, in art, and in society. In fact, do we any longer possess standards in taste? Even when people were not influenced through religious belief, they were controlled by a refinement resulting from tradition and good breeding. Does that exist today? Is there left any inherent restraint from the inborn recognition that certain things "are not done"? When one refers to the polite usages of civilized society one is thought to be funny. To be fastidious in speech and dignified in deportment qualifies one as a comedian.

We are constantly informed by the municipal administration that new public schools are needed, that even now in many localities children are only given half time. Private schools are multiplying, but in order to vie with each other in the successful patronage of the wealthy, devices of all kinds are introduced. Various climates are taken into serious consideration; so that in winter there is an annex in the South, whereas in summer some camp is provided either in the Adirondacks or in Maine. The children are sheltered by so many physical considerations that soon they become sensitive to every wind that blows. The ordinary experiences of tramping over snow, through mud, or despite obstacles, is eliminated so far as is possible with the result that our next generation will literally be raised in a bed of roses.

We do not need more schools which drive impractical knowledge into puny brains, but we need more schools where characters can be formed—where boys can be made more manly, and where girls can be made more womanly. There is practically no self-control, no self-discipline taught in the homes. Half of the studies advocated are dictated by the snobbishness of the intelligentsia. It is a case of the little learning which is the danger of modern life. Many subjects are taught, the knowledge of which is useless. Brains are befogged. Confusion follows, and in some cases suicide results. Morbid introspection, deplorable self-consciousness seizes the imagination of the young student. Life is projected through death. There is nothing that is real, nothing that is sincere. Affections are mistrusted, impulse to crime becomes natural. Everything is born of the physical, nothing is restrained through the moral.

I believe that instead of raising the standard of so-called modern education, that if we could return to arithmetic, spelling, geography, and grammar, we might be benefited thereby. Everything now is masticated in advance. Jaws will soon be saved the action of chewing. Learning will be administered in tabloid form. No effort of any kind will be necessary. As for citizenship, all responsibilities will be spared through additional legislation.

We have already been forbidden to drink. We shall soon be told what food products we are allowed to eat. We shall not have to decide what books to read or what plays to see because boards of censorship will do all that for us. We shall soon become such moral pigmies and such spineless creatures that we can sit down and wait to be instructed by those paid to make us decent or to prevent us from becoming indecent. We shall have no moral vertebrae. We shall be morons, in fact. This may seem a dark and exaggerated forecast, but look about today and see how much foundation there is for the gloomy picture.

Silk socks and silk stockings have taken the place of more substantial hose. Years ago, when William Ingersoll was to lecture in Boston, a large placard was placed as announcement in a window wherein were displayed some Jaeger one-piece suits. A lady passing by threw up her hands exclaiming, "What is the world coming to, when people no longer believe in God, and no longer believe in shimmies!" Today, at least, she would have forgotten that such a thing as the last mentioned garment ever existed.

It is merely a spurious tribute to avoid absolute nudity, and we are now very rapidly traveling back to the primitive attitude of our first parents who, it must be admitted, clutched at fig leaves as a mere concession to propriety.

Those ladies of the First Empire who were thought most indecent in their tunics would be today considered too much dressed. Those who, as described by Mark Twain, wore only strings of beads and a smile would not feel too much out of place in the modern drawing-room. It is claimed that clothing engenders self-consciousness, and that purity is evolved through the return to nature, all of which is tosh! The careful study given to a reduction of garments and the search for a tint of flesh color in the selection of stockings do not indicate that our poor little dears are ignoring their bodies as seductive assets.

I remember on one occasion, when a lady remarked that she could not afford to join a certain class in literature because she had just bought a very expensive hat, a friend answered: "Is is not extraordinary that you are willing to spend so much in putting something on your head, whereas you will not pay to put something in your head?"

We seem always ready to do everything but think. That is a luxury we rarely allow ourselves, yet perchance if those who direct modern education would strive to make the young people do a little plain thinking for themselves, the result might be admirable. But one of the main troubles today is that nothing is really done for our boys and girls but to preach at them. They are unjustly held responsible for the abominable methods of education of which they are the victims.

Personally, I find the youngsters I meet most amenable to reason. They have a good understanding of cause and effect to which one can appeal. Take them literally by the hand, make them feel the warmth of sympathy and affection in your grasp, and you will be astonished at the spirit of fine intention you arouse.

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BROOKS ADAMS

By SUMMERFIELD BALDWIN

A PARDONABLE, because innocent, satisfaction may have relieved the last hours of the earthly existence of Mr. Brooks Adams. For the agony of the agricultural society of the United States had been approaching the acute stage for months; a frantic Congress was devising quaint bills aimed to provide relief; and an astute banker, who happened to be Secretary of the Treasury, was gravely shaking his head. But Mr. Brooks Adams, who was dying, perhaps alone among his countrymen possessed the key to unlock the mystery of this tragedy. To be sure, it was hardly his fault that he was alone. For years, in numberless articles, and specifically thirty-two years ago in one of the world's masterpieces of philosophic history, he had been proferring his countrymen the key to that and many other mysteries of their times, of times past, of times to come.

The key was proferred but there were few to take it. The Law of Civilization and Decay was published in 1895. A second edition appeared in 1897. A President of the United States reviewed it; it was translated into French in 1899, into German in 1907. Yet it is a melancholy fact that not all the pages of either copy owned by the library of Harvard University have as yet been cut. Apparently no professor of that great institution has ever included the whole of this not very large volume in any of his courses of instruction. Surely this is symtomatic. Symtomatic, too, are the bland obituaries of the author which have graced the daily press. An eccentric, but genial grandson of John Quincy Adams, depressed by the control which capital exerts over democracies, and an enthusiastic partisan of free silver: in such terms as these the eulogies (or apologies) are conceived. A prophet is not without honor save in his own country. Our native faddists whip themselves into a fine enthusiasm over a mystical German named Spengler, and ignore one of themselves who in erudition, in acuteness, and in clarity brooks no rival in the field he has made his own.

The Law of Civilization and Decay is, in effect, a short history of human society so arranged as to demonstrate Adams's hypothesis of the law under which it has moved in the past, and hence by the scientific implication of the term law, that under which it will move hereafter. Adams the materialist links humanity to the natural order and holds that fear and greed are the forces which move society. The movement of society, its oscillations between barbarism and civilization he holds analogous to, if not identical with, a movement from a condition of physical dispersion, decentralization, to centralization or consolidation.

The force called fear, he holds, eventuates in the religious, military, artistic mental types. The force called greed eventuates through economic competition in the capitalist, or, par excellence, the banker. The fear of nature, and of nature's God, he argues by a brilliant generalization, made the relic the summum bonum of the earlier mediaeval European society. As Huysmans called the monasteries of France its lightning-rods, he shows how the fear of God, necessitating prayer and good works, made the religious life the ideal one in the Age of Faith. Saint Bernard and the Second Crusade he takes to mark the highest point to which the force of fear moved human society. Thence by degrees greed takes its place. Greed personified by Henrico Dandolo makes the Fourth a parody of crusades hardly more than half a century after Saint Bernard. Greed wrecks the Templars, greatest of the military orders, a hundred years later. Greed under the Tudors robs the monasteries, and robs the yeomen. Greed makes England a nation of pirates, then of merchant adventurers, then of imperialists, when Clive robs India of its hoards of money. Industrialism succeeds, and at last, early in the nineteenth century, the money-lenders, the bankers, become supreme and society reaches its ultimate consolidation. Economic competition dethrones priest and soldier alike. Both become the hirelings of the capitalist.

But Adams has a point of reference. All this happened before, in the late years of the Roman empire. The measure which he takes is currency. In those days, the money that had not flowed into the East was in the hands of the bankers. While they played at money-lending it ceased to be profitable to produce. The imposition of the gold standard early in the nineteenth century, and the successive exhaustion of the sources of the gold supply of the world he considers strictly analogous, for the gold of the world is in the hands of the bankers to be played with to their own interests, while producers, and first of all agricultural producers, starve. Hence, Adams was a free-silver man; and hence he could not but have seen in the present desperate plight even of American agriculturists evidence of the accuracy of his system.

Such is the skeleton of his thesis. Yet it throws many incidental lights both upon the past and present. The protagonists of his tragedy of man are a motley assortment: Saint Bernard stands over against Thomas Cromwell. The heroes of the Protestant revolt, Gardiner and Cranmer; the heroes of capital, Sir Josiah Child, Clive, Rothschild, Samuel Loyd are vividly, convincingly portrayed.

Brooks showed this work in manuscript to his distinguished brother Henry and was warned by him not to publish it if he ever wished for any of the honors which society confers. The warning was a good one.

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The Law of Civilization and Decay, despite its author's pathetic attempt to play the cynical materialist, is a tragic apology for the day when "fear," not greed, was the force which moved society. In 1895 it was desperately unsafe to apologize for the Age of Faith. To have done so would have been to preclude anyone at all from reading what one had written. Hence Adams's chapter on The Middle-Ages is compact of that sort of illustration of "superstition" dear to the heart of the liberal nineteenth century. But after the chapter on The Reformation, after setting side by side the bloated and avaricious king of England and the eighty-year-old Abbot Whiting of Glastonbury, one is not wholly unprepared for the flaming conclusion.

Henry Adams always objected to his brother's work on the ground that there was no "why" to it. Granted that society oscillates under the forces of fear and greed, why does it do so? The older brother devoted his effort to speculations on the higher metaphysical ground, and as all who have read his Mont St. Michel and Chartres know, reached some interesting though tentative conclusions. Brooks certainly never went so far, and indeed betrays elsewhere a doubt as to whether, paradoxically, chaos is not the "order" of nature. Henry Adams was certainly the greater metaphysicist of the singular pair, but he was wanting in those qualities which made his brother a great historical scientist. For if there be a science of history in the sense in which there is a science of biology, there must certainly stand at the end of every investigation an hypothesis as to the laws according to which human society functions. Henry, preoccupied with the "why," left his hypotheses in a distressingly inchoate state, but there is reason to believe that had he carried his spade work further, they would not have materially differed from his brother's.

Objectively considered, the doctrines of the Adamses represent the bankruptcy of the puritanical democratic theory. The state imagined by the great-grandfather John, and desperately defended by the grandfather John Quincy—the state wherein souls equal in the eyes of God, and perfectible by His grace, were to work out that perfection in a sort of earthly paradise, had after all developed a government more perfectly adapted to the needs of the bankers than any which had gone before. Their family history, instinct with intellectual tragedy, forced these brilliant grandchildren to explore logic and history in search of new fundamentals. By independent research, as the scientists say, they seem to have come to very similar conclusions. One spoke of the Virgin, the other of the force of fear (the beginning of wisdom); both found the Age of Faith.

OUR PHILIPPINES AND CHINA

By R. DANA SKINNER

"OUR Philippine policy is not a domestic, but an international issue. Its affects all of eastern Asia as well as ourselves and the Filipinos." These are probably the most important sentences in the refreshingly sane discussion of the Philippines* undertaken by Nicholas Roosevelt after an extensive trip in the Far East. Certainly they have attained premier importance in the short space of time since the book was written, due to the uprising in a new form of the ancient problem of the white man and his position in China. In days when every newspaper thunders from its front pages the complexities of Chinese revolt and the determination of Great Britain to maintain her prestige in the East intact, Mr. Roosevelt's analysis of the importance of America in the Philippines to the stability of international relations in the Pacific rings with uncommon timeliness.

His thesis, to which all other consderations now seem to bow through the stern sweep of events, is this: Political conditions in the Pacific have radically changed since we first occupied the Philippines. When we first talked of Philippine independence "the British navy was supreme in the Pacific, and there was every likelihood that the security of the independent Filipino republic would not be threatened." Today, however, "that assurance of peace and security which existed prior to 1914 has disappeared. To grant the Filipinos independence today not only would expose them to absorption by other countries less friendly to them than America, but might well unleash the dogs of war."

The development of this thesis is as interesting in practical diplomacy as it is disheartening to the international idealist. For it must be admitted that Mr. Roosevelt has put up to the United States a conflict of obligations not unlike the core of many Greek tragedies. There are moments, in reading this book, when every argument seems headed toward the absurdity that "we are there because we are, and must remain because we must"—that age-old justification of the imperialist. Yet a closer study reveals a firmer substance. We entered under one set of world conditions. Those conditions have changed. We are not living in an international vacuum. Our neighbors will be as much affected by our action as ourselves. Which, then, is our greatest responsibility—to the Filipinos or to world peace? If we do nothing, we are guilty of at least the appearance of poor faith toward the Filipinos. If we grant them freedom, we may precipitate a new conflict

**The Philippines: A Treasure and a Problem, by Nicholas Roosevelt. New York: J. H. Sears and Company, Inc. $4.00.*

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of world powers for control of the Far East. Which is the lesser of two evils?

The difficulty of the decision is only enhanced by conditions in the Philippines themselves, where, if Mr. Roosevelt is an accurate reporter, the prerequisites of successful independence have not yet been developed. The question is somewhat larger than the ability of the Filipinos, independently, to maintain an armed force sufficient for the defense of the islands. There are other, and far easier, ways of subjugating a people than through armed conquest. Peaceful penetration has become a high art these days, and unless a country has internal stability, a sound fiscal system and a fair degree of economic independence, it may soon find itself so completely mortgaged to another nation as to be forced to do the bidding of that nation. To those who think that it would be a simple matter to establish an enlightened democracy in the Philippines and then let the Filipinos shift for themselves, Mr. Roosevelt's careful analysis of the elements of discord, of the economic handicaps and weakness of the islands, of the difficulties of education, and of the religious as well as racial antagonisms among the Filipinos themselves, will offer many hours of profitable reflection.

Mr. Roosevelt leads us gently but none the less firmly to the conclusion that another generation, at least, will be required to bring the internal conditions of the islands to a point where independence might promise some stability. And from this conclusion springs his most important chapter on international relations. The Philippines, he reminds us, guard the southern approaches to the coast of China, and also unite Asia with the islands that lead to Australasia. "In the hands of Japan or China they would constitute a formidable threat for the Dutch East Indies, Australia, and New Zealand. In the hands of the United States they are a shield defending the Indies and Australasia against Asiatic aggression." Nor, from this statement, must we jump to the conclusion that Mr. Roosevelt is reinventing the "Yellow Peril." He merely takes the position of a realist, facing facts of population and economics. Japan has nearly four hundred people per square mile, China some two hundred and fifty, whereas the Philippines have less than a hundred. Australia has less than two inhabitants to the square mile. As the Dutch and British see it, if the Philippines were left defenseless, the Asiatic powers would seek the exploitation of the Philippines first, then the Dutch East Indies, and lastly the inviting expanse of Australia.

At the present moment, a balance of power exists in the Pacific sufficient to guarantee peace and prevent unfair exploitation. But with the United States removed, and the British sea-power in that region diminished in relation to the growing strength of Japan, this balance would no longer exist, and a new order would establish itself, possibly through serious conflict. With this possibility is tied up the British empire in India, and the repercussion there of any blow at British prestige in the Pacific or in China. "The presence of the United States in the Philippines," says Mr. Roosevelt, "makes certain that America's influence will be felt in determining the affairs of China. The Open Door has been one of the few foreign policies to which we have clung regardless of domestic partisanship. Our ability to keep the door open . . . rests on our prestige, which in the final analysis rests on force. This force is dependent on our naval base in the Philippines, and the effectiveness and mobility of our fleet in the Pacific. . . . The Philippines have, in fact, become the base on which American policy in eastern Asia rests today."

The news events of recent days supply an obvious confirmation of this "realistic" interpretation of American power in the East. So long as world affairs are to be settled by balanced power and competition of armaments, our continued presence in the far Pacific is undoubtedly a stabilizing factor of vast importance. In another sense, however, the most interesting aspect of Mr. Roosevelt's book is what it omits. It is an excellent summary of things as they are. But it neglects utterly, and perhaps intentionally, to suggest any program or even a hope of settlement along newer lines of international control. There is, for example, no thorough discussion of the possibility of increasing political independence of the Philippines, with corresponding international agreements as to foreign loans. Surely in this realistic age, we ought to see the glimmerings of an appreciation that sovereignty may be internationally recognized as a progressive attribute—that full sovereignty in a country may be recognized only as that country demonstrates its ability to fulfill the duties of sovereignty. The fiction that a territory must be either a dependent part of some larger country or else wholly independent and irresponsible ought to have no place in a world that prides itself on being practical. Just as we recognize the distinction between individuals "of age" and minors, placing the latter either with their families or under state guardianship, we can admit degrees of sovereignty in states, and provide for guardianships, either national or international. Perhaps Mr. Roosevelt's intention was too modest to permit a discussion of such possibilities, but surely the horns of the dilemma he has raised would be far less disheartening if he even hinted that there might be other ways out.

In the meantime, this book will go far to unsettle our complacency about the Philippine question. It states the terms of the problem with disconcerting frankness and even brutality. If it attempts no answer, it may provoke one, and that in itself will be a sturdy service. Read in conjunction with the news despatches from China, it may result in bringing us at least to the brink of our own Chinese wall, where we can peer out upon the complexities of a world challenging our most constructive thinking and our most generous determination to act wisely and with courage.

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COMMUNICATIONS

EASTERN AND WESTERN CATHOLICS

Garrison, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—My contribution of January 12, 1927, Religion in Russia Today, was somewhat out of date, for it was written in June, 1926, and many happenings have come to pass in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics since that time. The Exarch Theodoroff has been reimprisoned. A great many more Tykhonite churches have been taken by the Vedenskyites (not without bloodshed in some cases) and thus it is that the keys of most of the old cathedral churches are now held by Synodist bishops. The Soviet government has jailed Lord Sergius, Metropolitan of Nishni-Novgorod and acting head of the Patriarchists, because he refuses to disown monarchistic Russian Orthodox emigrants. The Synodists lack money; their laymen are falling away; many have gone back to the Tykhonites. On the other hand, it seems that among young folk the growth of materialism and atheism has been very considerable and that the breakup of the family constitutes a great peril for Russian Orthodoxy.

Mr. Mitterauer, in The Commonweal of January 30, writes that the sessions of the Vienna reunion congress "lasted through three days and listened to serious discourses by distinguished representatives of Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and the Uniats." Do you not think that this setting off of "Uniats" from "Catholicism" is a use likely to bring about ill will and, therefore, better shunned by writers who wish to strengthen love and understanding between Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics? Rightly speaking, every Catholic but the supreme Pontiff is a "Uniat"—Catholicism depends, always, on a man's oneness in allegiance, belief, and seven sacraments with the "key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven and of grace" (Orthodox Byzantine Orthros and Hesperinos for June 28). "Catholicus" means "faithful to the successor of the Good Shepherd" in the same way that the name "acatholicus" stamps its bearer as "a wanderer from the fold." Roumanian and Russian converts from Orthodoxy like to be called "Orthodox Catholics" because "Unya" is a Polish word of Latin birth originally used with reference to the Ukrainian (not Russian) Union of Brest-Litovsk in 1595. To the Pravoslav mind, "Uniat" recalls pro-Polish proselytism brought into being through a holy trickery and entailing disownership of Russian fatherland and faith. Greek Catholics do not wish to be called "Uniats"; the Holy See certainly does not look on them as a group apart, a kind of Christians in some manner less Catholic or right-believing than Latin Catholics. Why, therefore, differentiate between "Catholicism" and the "Uniats"? Why not speak simply of Eastern Catholic and Western Catholic? Such unlikenesses as do exist between Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics rest on psychological and racial narrowness. The distinctions are disciplinary, not creedal or moral.

Jingoistic selfishness is the bane of the kingdom of Christ on earth. Its wounds may be seen, unhappily, even in so-called Catholic countries. Peoples as well as souls may suffer from inferiority complexes. These peoples and souls need the light touch of a feeling heart and an understanding mind if they are to be won to, or kept in the bond of truth and unity. Sometimes we ought to think of the willing robbery the world's Maker does as, day by day, He freely throws aside His dazzling might and lowers Himself to come down to souls—not only as a workman, but even as our daily bread. If God sees fit to do such thoughtful kindness to the souls of men, does it not behoove us Westerns to cast aside our proud Latinisms: our individual distinctions between "Catholicism" and the "Uniats"? The Eastern Catholics are the best possible link to bind up Eastern Orthodox to the chair of Christ the King. We ought to treat them with a loving, intelligent tactfulness.

L. MAYNARD GRAY.

PAMPHLETS ON CHURCH SERVICES

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—Will the Catholic people ever follow church services intelligently? That they don't is certain. But does this mean that they won't? Instead of answering my own question, may I relate a little incident?

Last Good Friday evening I found myself, with a Protestant friend, in a Catholic church where three zealous priests and a number of boys were singing Tenebrae. In the sanctuary all was perfect. The church was packed. From where we stood, far to one side, we had a view of the congregation. We were following the service with a "Holy Week"; here and there in the crowd we could see someone with a book; the majority sat idle, looking on. Some seemed curious; some puzzled. A flapper nodded; an old man fumbled his beads. "How wonderful that they follow without a book!" murmured my friend. I pulled my face straight. "They're born to it," I fabricated. Must not the angels in heaven weep? Or perhaps laugh?

There are the people in the church, assembled. There is no need to advertise, to fill every corner of a Catholic church. The people come thronging. The Lord floods America with opportunity and with divine grace. And we let the floods of grace go over our heads.

With the people receptive as they are, suppose that their minds were fed; suppose that they had in their hands to read such words as these:

"To Thee my heart doth speak, and Thee mine eyes do seek;
Thy face, O Lord, I long for."

Or these: "Wondrously blazedst Thou forth from the eternal hills." Cannot Tenebrae with its heart-penetrating psalms be in the hands of the people? So I asked myself last Lent.

And now, to my great joy, I see the need fulfilled. There is actually to be had from the Paulist Press for five cents a pamphlet giving the full Tenebrae service for Good Friday—with clear explanations, and in English. And, for a treat, the translation is Father Martindale's.

This pamphlet is unique. It leaves nothing to be guessed at. At the point where a candle is put out, there is a bracket. I am told: "The first candle is extinguished." Thus I can check up with the priest and keep the place. No matter how little I know, I am sure I can follow Tenebrae with this pamphlet.

On the coming Good Friday I am going to go to that church and hope to see the whole congregation reading and following the marvelous service, so full of the enthralling wisdom of heaven.

But may we not also have pamphlets on special Masses, on Vespers? May not this new kind of pamphlet prove the opening of a holy door—letting the people, little by little, pamphlet by pamphlet, into the inspiring world of the liturgy?

KATHERINE BYLES.

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POEMS

Seventh Station

'Tis not the stones that conquer now, nor the knotted flails;
It is the soul that falters here, it is the soul that fails.

O midway of our mortal life when the strong soul is spent,
When the compass loses its polar star and faith its firmament,

Because the flinty road is long, the steep climb without end,
We seem to sink, abandoned by every hope and friend.

O lengthening years of weariness, inflexible cold fate!
Borne down by secret self-disgust and the cross's cruel weight

We fall at last, not on our knees in supplicating prayer,
But wretchedly, face downward, in agonized despair.

The jaded body falls, ah yes, but not till the tired will stumbles—
Save us, Lord, from this second fall when the weary spirit crumbles!

PAUL CLAUDEL.
(*Translated by Henry Morton Robinson.*)

To One Growing Old

Oh, never droop your beautiful proud banner,
And do not mute the challenge in your voice!
Wear like a soldier's cloak your old gay manner,
Nor ever let surrender be your choice.

Years must not loose the warm clasp of your fingers,
With all the ripened richness of old wine
The spirit strengthens, and the beauty lingers
Of finished pattern and fulfilled design.

Yours now to sense the power and the glory;
Grown, with a touch of God's own wisdom, wise,
Look on at life, savor the whole great story,
And never tame the eagle in your eyes.

You were a fighter always, none will doubt you,
Honorable peace is yours; unvanquished, leave
The old scarred field, and let time wrap about you
A calm as lovely as a summer's eve.

KATHARINE ALLISON MACLEAN.

Dark Stars

Whence come these darkened stars that block the rays
From true stars, now and then?
In this strange universe, where all decays,
Gods die, as well as men.

Man dies, and few are saddened or undone.
Only in one small home, the light grows dim.
A god that dies takes planet, world and sun
Into the dark with him.

You would not have this earth on which we stand
Go, blind and staggering, down the purple void?
Then drop that poisoned javelin from your hand
Before you slay its god.

CLARIBEL WEEKS AVERY.

Decoration: Girl With Shawl

In your keen purposes chastise
The lazy tongue's betraying drawl;
Your poised, disdainful shoulders rise
From passions woven in your shawl.

Your swift-eyed prudence was not meant
To go disguised in Spanish art;
Upon these snarled festoons were spent
The fevers of a wounded heart.

Some gypsy's fingers found relief
Engarlanding this hissing silk,
Who drank the bitter wine of grief
When you were fed on bread and milk.

You sit enfolded in my gift,
Quite disenchanted, calm of breath.
Beware, lest secret serpents lift
Their sudden tongues of death!

MORTON ZABEL.

Wedgwood

Though in the humblest room life spreads my table,
And sets before me routine's coarsest food,
Yet served from memory's Wedgwood I am able
To bow my head in grace and count it good.

Always I see a glad procession wending
Its stately way on cup and plate and bowl,
Moving as if to music, and extending
Clusters of joy to feast my hungry soul.

Unmarred by flaw of surfeit or regretting,
Each one clear-cut, a perfect thing alone,
Across the steadfast blue of unforgetting
March those white hours your heart and mine have known.

MOLLY ANDERSON HALEY.

March

Arrogant charlatan!—your icy breath
Makes earth surrender but a little while.
There is a fear beneath your cruel smile. . . .
There is a tremor when you laugh at death. . . .
Exulting in your strength, you dare defy
The universe—the tempest-haunted seas,
The snow-wrapt hills, the torn and twisted trees.
Beyond the cloud-veiled challenge of the sky
You reach the gates of heaven itself—and lo!
Such quietude repels your pagan shout.
Humbled and hesitant, you stand without,
Clad in the mocking remnants of the snow.
Lord of the wind, your weary requiem sing—
Scarce heard amid the triumph-song of spring!

CATHERINE PARMENTER.

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

Money From Home

EVERY so often, Frank Craven pops up on Broadway with one of those plays from spotless town. Plays of this kind, unless they are extremely good, simply furnish a target for the sophisticates—not, if you please, because they are "clean," but because, being immaculate, they have forgotten the necessity of being good plays as well. Whereupon the derisive ones say: "There you are—you can't make good drama out of simple things! The old materials are stale. Give us modern drama, modern problems. Give us salty, coarse speech. Smash the walls of Victorian reticence."

Of course, Frank Craven did give us The First Year. There was a play with enough wit and humanity to make its mark and draw persistently large audiences. New Brooms, as I recall it, was not quite so good. And his present play, Money From Home, has fallen still farther down the scale. At that, it is not half so bad as you would think from reading the newspaper reports. But it is not—if one may use a non-technical phrase—written from the heart. It is written in the comedy and not the farce key—but it lacks the serious moments of real feeling which alone make comedy effective. And there you have, I believe, the secret of the prejudice against the professionally "clean" play. Lack of true emotional situation. Lack of honest reaction to the feelings of the characters themselves. Surface comedy.

The work of George Kelly illustrates quite well the importance which innocuous stories may attain when handled with a true understanding of human feeling. You do not hear the epithet of "clean play" slung at Kelly's writings, largely because his characters have the capacity for suffering as well as laughter. Their problems may not seem gigantic to us, but they are decidedly serious to the characters themselves. And that fact alone gives weight and importance to the play. The moment you begin to feel something of the mystery of the simplest mind, you have a sense of the reality of the character. You begin to share his or her emotions. Your interest is heightened, your curiosity piqued.

Imagine, for example, a girl, brought up by old relatives, who suddenly comes into possession of a few thousand dollars. She has never known the power of money, only the crushing weight of poverty. Romance and adventure have never come her way. Suppose this girl is torn between a desire to expand her life and an inherited instinct of thrift and parsimony. What will she do? Save her money and marry prosaically? Or spend it all in one glorious adventure? Jennie Patrick, in Money From Home, is that kind of a girl. But Frank Craven has shown us only one side of her. From the first moment of the play, you are never in suspense as to what she will do. She tells everybody, right and left, that she will go to New York and spend every cent she has. No doubts or misgivings. Nothing to make her human and interesting. She becomes simply a type character and not an individual. If she gets into difficulties, you feel she is a fool. If all ends happily, you feel she is lucky. And the play becomes nothing but plot. Drama has flown out the window.

As for Dr. James Durham, the part played by Mr. Craven himself, we have here simply the old reformed crook. Once more, type instead of individual. Plot instead of drama. An obvious line of action from start to finish. If all "clean" plays were like this, the critics would be amply justified in yawning. But the fortunate fact remains that when a really good dramatist takes up the lives of simple people in simple situations, he can give to them all the dramatic interest demanded by the most jaded of critics. The fault of the average "clean" play lies, not in its subject-matter, but in the fact that it requires more skill to write convincingly of simple subjects than of complex and sensational ones. Money From Home will give you a fairly amusing evening. But you will never mistake it for a fine play. Mr. Craven could learn many lessons even from Anne Nichols!

Loud Speaker

AT LAST the revolutionaries have a theatre of their own! The "active management" of the New Playwrights Theatre, "is in the hands of five working playwrights." So says the manifesto on the first program of this new group. John Howard Lawson, author of Processional, is of the illustrious five; also John Dos Passos (The Moon Is a Gong); Em Jo Basshe (Adam Solitaire); Francis Edwards Faragoh (Pinwheel); and Michael Gold. Curiously enough, this group does not seem possessed of one great element of showmanship—the ability to spring a surprise. Imagine the sensation along Broadway if such a group had selected as its first play a fine, stirring modern drama, presented with power and imagination, but without the fantastic tinsel of expressionism! That would have been the unexpected—as if Flo Ziegfeld instead of the Theatre Guild had staged the Brothers Karamazov! Or as if the Guild itself has presented Abie's Irish Rose!

But, no! Loud Speaker, by Lawson, is just the kind of surface satire everybody feared—presented, as everybody suspected, in a "constructivist" setting, and amusing only by virtue of the new stunts thought up for the occasion. The only real surprise is Mr. Lawson's failure to come through with anything approaching the power and virility of Processional. For when I say that everyone suspected surface satire, I mean from this group as a whole rather than from Lawson personally. I am sure that if Lawson would forget his obsession for novelty in dramatic form, and content himself with writing a play of character and emotional struggle, he would rapidly emerge as one of the finest playwrights we have. There were truly tremendous moments in Processional—cosmic moments, as the new school would say—when the whole turmoil of American life, tragedy, and resurrection stood stark and revealed on the stage. But Loud Speaker has none of this magic. It is simply a satire on the most commonplace of all subjects, political hypocrisy, coupled for good measure to the obvious pranks of the tabloid papers. There are, perhaps, three spots in the play where something else emerges for an instant—an almost tragic questioning of life by the characters themselves. But these moments pass all too quickly and are submerged almost at once by the blare of the commonplace.

Possibly if the part of Harry U. Collins, candidate for governor, had been played by someone else than Seth Kendall, the play might have risen to some unity and force. But Mr. Kendall's performance was dull, unimaginative, and monotonous—the polar opposite of a lively, humorous, and magnetic performance by Romney Brent as a tabloid reporter. Agnes Lumbard as the Collins daughter was personable and entertaining, and Leonard Sillman was more than competent as the dancing butler.

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But the production as a whole moved slowly and spasmodically, due largely to the physical difficulty of the miles of stairs over which characters rushed back and forth as they dodged about the mazes of the skyscraper setting. It is unfair to Harry Wagstaff Gribble's direction to lay the blame for this handicap at his door.

The humor of the play ranges from the obvious to the coarse. A few puns of the brothel variety are hung onto the last act. Of distinction, the play has none. Of wit, only a pallid variety. Of amusing stunts in staging, quite a few, due presumably to the ingenuity of the scenic designer, Mordecai Gorelik. But above all, it is lamentable that a group representing so much self-admitted talent, could find nothing more stimulating with which to start an experiment of so important a character.

Fog

JOHN WILLARD, author of The Cat and the Canary, has written this mystery melodrama about a fog and—possibly—in one. At least, there are moments when action and even mystery become suspended in something very like a fog and when the dialogue wanders hopelessly as if lost. In spite of this, Fog is very good theatre at times, and before the end of the last act the audience is screaming directions and cautions at the heroine in the true spirit which such thrillers should create.

It is rather curious that so sharp a line should be drawn between mystery plays and all other forms of drama. It makes you wonder if, some day, we shall see the collaboration of the detective-story playwright with some such constant retoucher as George Abbott. In the present case, Mr. Willard has evolved an ingenious plot. He has chosen an eerie setting—a dilapidated old schooner adrift in a fog. Yet the dialogue is so false, the human, or feeling, emotions are so carelessly developed, and the action proceeds so unevenly, that you wonder at times how a modern audience can accept it at all and suffer any degree of illusion. You wonder—but you have to accept the fact, as demonstrated by the nervous laughs, the short screams, and the solemn between-the-acts discussions.

The last act, however, does achieve something of real theatrical force. It picks up the loose threads of narrative, the vague suggestions of human emotion, the possibilities of character development, and whips them together in a scene of wild but rhythmic disorder. If the earlier parts of the play were anything like as good as this last scene, one could write an enthusiastic report. But they are not as good, and even the curtain of the second act, which offers large possibilities, is badly bungled by a combination of awkward writing and clumsy direction.

Robert Keith, after a long period at O'Neill—in the Great God Brown and Beyond the Horizon—plays the manly hero of this concoction without in any way adding to his growing reputation. The best part, theatrically, is assigned to Charles Dow Clark. He makes the most of it. The only girl's part is played by Vivienne Osborne, who, if memory plays no tricks, was last year's Aloma of the too well-known South Seas. She is entirely unsuited to a part that should, in spite of awkward lines, convey something of helpless terror.

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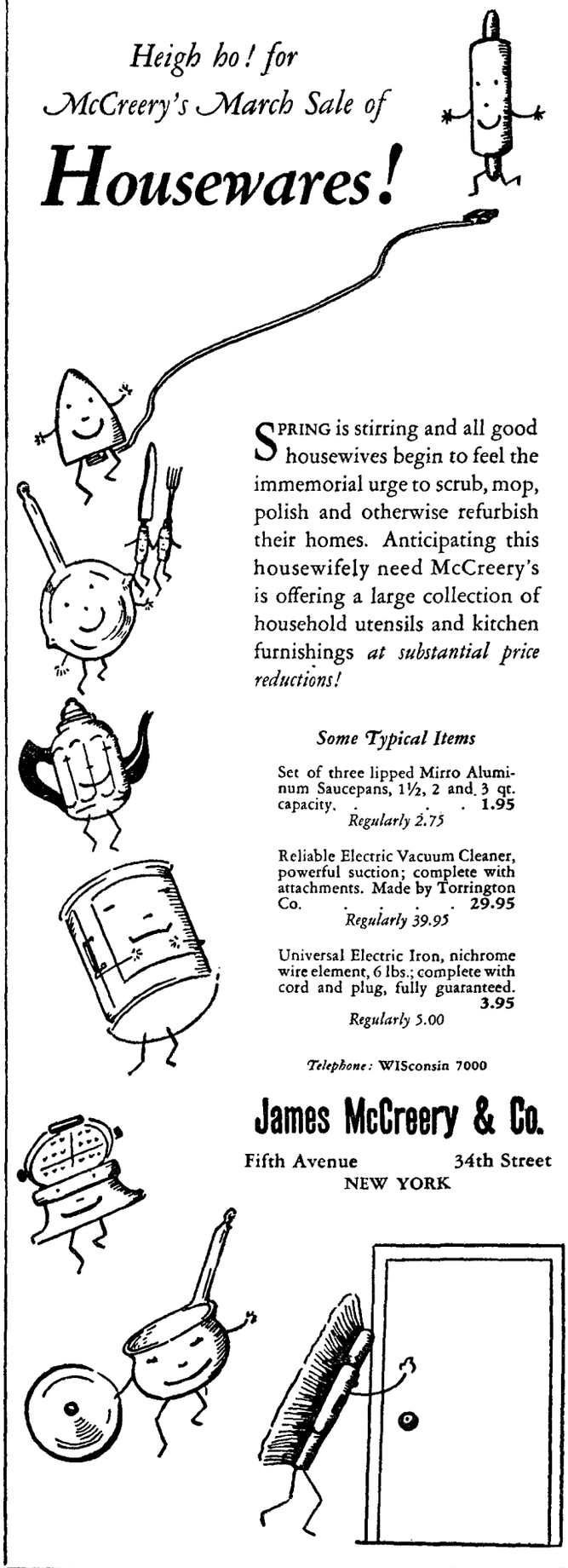

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BOOKS

The World's Debt to the Irish, by James J. Walsh. Boston: The Stratford Company. $2.50.

THERE is always something a little ungrateful in self-congratulation at the benefits we derive from others' suffering, no matter how much in God's design these can be shown to be. The tale of the Irish nation and the Irish race is one of the most tragic history has to tell. Cut off by geographical position from all chance of succor at the hands of his fellows in blood and religion, his humanistic culture smothered under centuries of economic necessity, the fairy gold of his chalices hammered into misspent gold, his native aristocracy banished abroad or underplowed into the soil while a pinchbeck generation of alien placemen seized their lands and titles, even the emergence of the Celt into nationhood in our own day does not make amends for the centuries of mischance and oppression that lie like a yawning and horrible fissure across his national story. The record of English and British rule in Ireland can be compared to nothing but some secret sin in a life outwardly prosperous and seemly. The opinion of the civilized world concurs in denouncing it, and the voice of the apologist and propagandist whenever it is raised is drowned in the chorus of reprobation. The measure of English sincerity in English professions of righteousness is best judged by the measure of English repentance—or silence, when Ireland is mentioned.

Possibly a consciousness of misdoing lies back of the comparative neglect of ancient Irish history by British savants and historians. In The World's Debt to the Irish, it is significant that Dr. James J. Walsh, who is giving us the result of twenty-five years of investigation, has to record that "the important authorities as to the place of the Irish in the history of civilization are, above all, the German and French savants who have devoted themselves to the study of Celtic influences in the world."

Dr. Walsh, in an introductory chapter, sets the keynote of his new book with a fearless assertion that the Irish race can claim to be one of the "five peoples in the world's history" who "have made supreme contributions to civilization as we have it at the present time," the others being the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans and Italians, and that their earliest and greatest contribution was the carrying of Christian light into the homelands of the barbarous peoples whose pioneers were pressing upon the Roman empire. Historians, he shows, have failed to realize either the volume of this missionary evidence or its momentous character. The dramatic quality of the contact between barbarism and Rome has diverted their attention from the quiet apostolate that was working, as it were, from the rear, and relying, not upon the imposing aspects of an ancient civilization, but purely and solely upon the things of the spirit. Yet: "There are literally hundreds of these Irish monks remembered all over Europe, and their birthday or their death-day celebrated in places many hundreds of miles away from their homes."

This heyday of missionary effort abroad corresponded with an upsurge of art and culture at home that is one of the marvels of the world. An interesting chapter in Dr. Walsh's book is that in which he gives a description of the famous Book of Kells, of which it has been well remarked that were it found isolated and unaccounted for in some tumulus, it would be quite sufficient evidence upon which to base a confident assumption of a high degree of civilization on the part of the people who could produce it.

"The elaborateness of the decoration," Dr. Walsh tells us, "is almost beyond belief. Perhaps the best testimony to its intricacy and minute artistry is to be found in the fact that the [monograph] page is so beautiful that it has tempted many modern draftsmen to make a copy of it, but though a great many have tried they have failed almost without exception and a number of the most accomplished and most enthusiastic . . . have confessed . . . they found the Book of Kells beyond their power."

Of Irish jewelry, claimed by Sir William Wilde to be "the most gorgeous and magnificent specimens of gold-work discovered anywhere in the world," Dr. Walsh tells us that: "Over and over again those who have studied these interesting pieces of jewelry have wondered how the Irish craftsmen ever accomplished their work. . . . The gold wire . . . is drawn so finely that the craftsmen in the modern time find it practically impossible to use pure gold wire in this way because when they try to solder it it melts in the midst of the necessary manipulations."

In his chapter on Ancient Irish Medicine, Dr. Walsh is very much on his own ground. After making every allowance for the very primitive and partial lights on the human structure accorded doctors of the past, what he tells us is not without its suggestion that a certain instinct for health has had a great deal to do with preserving the physique of the Irish race under conditions where many peoples would have deteriorated. "To the historical rule of no hospitals," says Dr. Walsh, "there were two noteworthy exceptions. Strange as it may appear, these two exceptions occurred at the two opposite confines of the civilized world. . . . One of these was in India, the other in Ireland." The old Brehon laws are quoted to show us that a sounder hygiene obtained in old Irish hospitals than even those in our great cities could boast of till comparatively recently. In order to secure an unpolluted water supply, they were "to be built on the bank of a running stream, or with such a stream passing through the precincts." They were provided with doors, to be left open in turn according to the prevailing wind. Incidentally, Dr. Walsh corrects the prevailing impression, largely due to Lady Aberdeen's well-intentioned activities, that tuberculosis is indigenous to Irish soil. The "half-door," he tells us, open day and night, was the physical salvation of the Irish through years of overcrowding and undernourishment. If consumption is commoner now, the mishap is due to "the return of a number of immigrants from America," who had contracted the disease in our great cities, and were received and nursed only too hospitably and lovingly when they returned to "die on the old sod." It is with a surprise that would be greater had not Dr. Walsh's erudition in preceding chapters prepared us for it, that we hear of such things as trepanning, clinics, hydropathic treatment, graduated fees, and regulations against the unlicensed practice of what today would be described as osteopathy.

As we read through the evidence which Dr. Walsh has amassed, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that a very precious and fine civilization was evolving itself in ancient Erin, to be crushed, in blood and tears, before it had given more than a hint of what, under happier circumstances, it might have become. Perhaps, had Ireland been less true to herself, had she accepted as England and France accepted, the incursions of the Northmen, and thickened the almost magical fluidity of her civilization with their coarser and more practical integument, the history of Ireland would have been different. Whether we think it would have been better depends largely on the view we take of the comparative demands of flesh and spirit. One duty surely confronts the Irish race today. A people

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whose existence as a nation at all has been for centuries a standing challenge to injustice, and a standing evidence that the harder way may be the safer must not abdicate its ethical function at this late day merely because its children sit in the seats of power and learning from sea to sea. The beautiful words of Mr. Padraic Colum, which Dr. Walsh quotes, may well serve as the exordium to this latest, and perhaps best, book of this cultured physician and writer:

"It is this shore, 'trod by no tropic feet,' that still holds the visions and the music and the memories of lovers and saints and rovers of an honor-keeping race—

'Brave hearts, ye never did aspire
Wholly to things of earth.' "

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

Young Anarchy, by Philip Gibbs. New York: George H. Doran Company. $2.00.

Green Forest, by Nathalie Sedgwick Colby. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.00.

The Delectable Mountains, by Struthers Burt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.00.

IN A WORLD where human seniors loom as impotent as Grecian shades in Elysian fields, the novelist by preference holds up his mirror to youth in revolt. Three new novels interpret types of youth in the "jazz age" for the benefit of those in their second or third blooming, for, after all, actual youth runs rather than reads. Thus Philip Gibbs, in Young Anarchy, offers a study, in the author's frankly journalistic style, of the social reflexes of London's equivalent for New York's post-war generation. And like a majority of those who in the United States have in hand the training and education of youth, Mr. Gibbs, developing his love-story, concludes that the younger generation's cynical bark is worse than its bite. His young anarchists are not really disintegrating morally; despite adjustment to new life conditions which seem normal to them though revolutionary to their elders, one need not despair of them. As Lettice, his heroine, says: "There's no risk if the girl is decent and the boy well brought up by his sisters and girl friends." This optimistic point of view is what Mr. Gibbs is chiefly concerned in establishing, and his characters enjoy explaining their new freedom quite as much as practising it.

In Mrs. Nathalie Sedgwick Colby's Green Forest—not Hudson's Mansions, but an Edenic dream-garden—the older generation shows to qualified advantage. A week's trip on an Atlantic liner suffices—the author writes with distinction and ease of manner—to establish a mother's self-sacrifice and a daughter's egotism. Shirley, free at her husband's death to marry David, a faithful adorer, is dragged off by her daughter Suzette on a European trip to serve the girl's pique against Tony, the boy whose engagement ring she has returned. Shirley and David (notice of whose death is cabled Shirley while on the steamer) are too good to be true; Suzette is so true to a certain type of selfish, hard-lacquered society young girl, that she is "good." She is no Lettice, whose ideals of the newer freedom of youth are grounded on fundamental decency, but a Victorian prude whose modern surface mannerisms overlie a nature cheap, egotistic, and vulgar. A first novel by a writer who is at home in her social backgrounds, the book has definite merits of form and delineation, despite occasional exaggerations of phrase.

The Delectable Mountains, by Struthers Burt, seems in many ways the most mature and sensitive of our novelistic trio.

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The author does not give us a photographic group reflex of modern youth, like Gibbs; nor a specific portrait of a modern girl not, in essence, "modern." His is the story of an American girl of twenty-three, no longer in life's flapper flush, and a man of thirty-four. Mercedes is a chorus-girl, her background the hectic one of the New York stage; Stephen's Philadelphian milieu is aureoled with the prestige of the only real aristocracy, in a European sense, in America—progenitors of high position in colonial days. Both are at variance with their social environments. A chance meeting, the kindling of sympathy between two natures basically fine, results in marriage. But life on Stephen's Wyoming ranch brings disillusion: two powerfully individual reserves are unable to overcome their mutual inarticulateness. Mercedes decides to return to her profession and Stephen lets her go.

Without breaking the tie which binds them, and out of their emotional contacts with other men and women, a better understanding of the other slowly dawns in the soul of each. Mercedes returns to the Wyoming ranch to bear Stephen's child, and there he returns to her. The New York, Philadelphian, and western ambients are convincing; the secondary characters, whether merely sketched or, as in the case of Vizatelly, the friend of both husband and wife, glowingly vital, fit naturally into place. The author writes with honesty, warmth and, on occasion, a depth and appeal. He makes convincingly clear that virtue, in a basic sense, is never out of date, and—something worth heeding at a time when women of character as well as mere alimony-seekers are prone to cast off the tie matrimonial in petulance—that the institution of marriage is greater than the individual.

FREDERICK H. MARTENS.

Napoleon, by Emil Ludwig; translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. New York: Boni and Liveright. $3.00.

"THE story of Napoleon produces on me an impression like that produced by the Revelation of Saint John the Divine. We all feel there must be something more in it, but we do not know what."

This observation of Goethe's is used as the motto for the first book of the present biography. It is singularly apt; for one's answer to the question it implies reveals instantly one's real conception (if any) of the significance of human life. What, if anything, does the career of a Napoleon mean—to me?

Consider this breathless and monstrous career: an obscure Corsican is a lieutenant of artillery in the French Republican army at the age of twenty-two; at twenty-five he is a brigadier-general; at twenty-seven he conquers Italy; at twenty-nine he overwhelms Egypt; at thirty he is first consul and dictator of France; at thirty-five he crowns himself emperor, proceeds to grasp political control of Europe from the Tagus to the Vistula, and makes kings of his brothers; at forty-three he destroys a half-million lives in an incredible invasion of Russia; at forty-five he sees his whole empire reduced to dust, and is himself banished to Elba; at forty-six he returns, is once more emperor, is outlawed, and defeated in the ghastly armageddon of Waterloo; and is shipped to the volcanic rock of St. Helena, where he spends the last six years of his life in an agony of loneliness and squalor.

Even when reviewed in a sober, analytical account like Ludwig's, which deliberately eschews the pseudo-glamour of military campaigns, this story leaves the reader with the sensation of having experienced a horrible nightmare—a nightmare so extraordinary and withal so vividly illuminated by infernal fires as to compel him to interpret or to rationalize it somehow. What is he to make of it all?

Carlyle viewed Napoleon as a hero, as a scourge in the hands of God, whereby an insincere and drunken Europe was tamed. Others have seen him as an illustration of the power of the mind over matter, as the radiator of a magic personal spell, angelic or diabolical, but always irresistible to individuals and masses. Napoleon as a mystic agency or as a mystic force: we must choose between the two views.

Emil Ludwig, a poetic dramatist of considerable note in Germany, inclines to the latter tendency. He presents the "man of destiny" again, in a rapid, powerful style, reminiscent of Carlyle and Goethe. But Ludwig's interpretation falls far behind Carlyle's in coherency and compulsion. It throws out various mystic motifs, drops them to take up new ones, and recurs to them again. Napoleon is now successful as the fascinating visionary, the world-weary conqueror, sighing after the manner of his favorite Ossian or the Goethe of the Sorrows of Werther. Again, he is a cold mathematician, hence dominant as the sole realist among men self-hypnotized with the unreal logic of sentimentality (as Shaw puts it, he alone realizes that if a cannon-ball hits a man, it kills him). Again, he is a real prophet, laying the foundation for that United States of Europe which he knows will inevitably arise out of the tragic welter of his own age.

The trouble with all these rationalizations is that they seek causes for the Napoleon saga in the man himself. But one man cannot disembowel or overthrow a continent; only a continent can do that. What is apparent to Carlyle and to every other analyst of great penetrative powers, including Bonaparte himself, is that the reasons must be sought outside the man. Napoleon's influence on Europe is not to be explained by any far-reaching aims of his own; for he had few, and these were constantly changing. His thought generally followed after his actions, and seldom preceded and determined them. "I know not what I do," he wrote to his wife, "for everything depends on events. I have not a will of my own, but expect everything from their outcome." To the Duchess of Weimar he remarked, "Believe me, there is a Providence which guides all. I am merely its instrument." His impulses urged him to grab everything he could, and he grabbed with all his might.

Thus, for himself, his life signified no more and no less than those of countless little Napoleons, earlier and later, signified for themselves as individuals. The scale was prodigiously larger in his case; but where all is relative, as in any individual's career, scale means nothing.

Considered exclusively in relation to the circumstances which made it possible, Napoleon's life-story (that is to say, its universal essence) may be viewed as an expression or a materialization of the frightful confusion of an age of too violent and too sloppy thinking. Millions of individuals were involved, and millions wished their fate upon themselves; horror was inevitable, Napoleon or no Napoleon. The "hero's" part in this tragedy of masses then reduces itself to that of a mere tool in the hands of chance, or of God, or of both—take your choice. As Thomas Hardy has phrased it in The Dynasts, Napoleon was "the brazen rod which stirs the fire—because it must."

Ludwig has told the story so movingly, yet so economically and fairly, according to the documents quoted, that one can easily condone its lack of a sufficiently powerful and unified interpretation. The reader must supply that himself. Ably translated as it is, the book does vividly present a nightmare which reflection may possibly transfigure into a revelation.

ERNEST BRENNECKE, JR.

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The Cross, by Sigrid Undset; translated by Charles Archer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.00.

THE two earlier volumes of Sigrid Undset's trilogy were like gardens in which the girl Kristin grew to the ripe bloom of womanhood—grew through the mystical seasons of the Church, through passionate moments during which the impact of lusty blood was fierce, through hours of pain, realization, longing and despair, until her children were grouped about her and she had nothing more to learn from life. But this, God's unfathomable training-school, had not yet done with her. It is marvelous how one senses in reading Sigrid Undset that the end is by no means at hand. No event, or situation, could in itself be the tremendous finale—nothing short of death, indeed, and the vision of the soul's flight, in so far as the artist is able to divine that.

Kristin had come back to her home country, since the displeasure of the king and her husband's folly had despoiled them of the magnificent estate at Husaby. Love that has been the whole meaning of her married life means nothing temporarily. The cares of an estate upon which her own free-born pride, the welfare of her children and the good name of her family depend, embitter her toward Erlend, the Viking lover who remains without an ounce of practical reason. It is inevitable that a woman of her kind should feel so. Let it be said here that Sigrid Undset is never trapped by the most formidable snare laid in the path of novelists. She never interposes her subjective desire to have the story progress otherwise than it must. Kristin moves as only Kristin would, the arbiter of her destiny and never the author's plaything. As for Erlend, he, too, is relentlessly objective. Bored to death with the routine of his wife's husbandry, he takes refuge in a country place where there is hunting and freedom. Finally Kristin goes to him, eager to plead the problem of her sons' future and to bring the husband back where he belongs. Once again, however, Erlend triumphs, as he has since the beginning. The precious days are given over to love, and Kristin returns to her home alone.

But the last wager with destiny has been played. Their love is not comparable with death—it is stronger than life. Events pass swiftly. Erlend, returning in haste to defend his wife's slandered honor, confronts her angry with his neglect and her own plight. He tries to ward off the blows of snarling peasants, and falls, mortally wounded. Then, in a vivid scene which grips one like the last meeting of Faust and Margaret, both see through the puzzle of existence. After Erlend's death, Kristin solves the immediate problems of her sons' future and then retires to a convent, where she dies after having rendered arduous service on behalf of the poor. But time had been given her to reflect upon the bitter brew she had drunk, in which were her own sins, the woes of others, the shock of disappointment, and long days of sacrifice. And "it seemed to her to be a mystery that she could not fathom, but which she knew most surely none the less, that God had held her fast in a covenant made for her without her knowledge by a love poured out upon her richly—and in despite of her self-will, in despite of her heavy, earth-bound spirit, somewhat of this love had become part of her, had wrought in her like sunlight in the earth, had brought forth increase which not even the hottest flames of fleshly love nor its wildest bursts of wrath could lay waste wholly. A handmaiden of God had she been—a wayward, unruly servant, slothful and neglectful, impatient under correction, but little constant in her deeds—yet had He held her fast in His service, and under a glittering golden ring a mark had been set secretly upon her, showing that she

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was His handmaid, owned by the Lord and King Who was now coming to give her freedom and salvation."

The Providence of God moves through this tremendous pageant of mediaeval life like a constant, steadfast undertow. In the light of that radiance one somehow forgets the brutal frankness of the actual circumstances of the story—the wild lusts, the intimacies of marriage, the primitive surrender to anger and jealousy, which are everywhere antecedent to remorse and the rigorous penances. Sigrid Undset's minutely described matrimonial situation is half pagan, half Catholic, the unregulated background showing through the benign Christian pattern as the outlines of a pagan temple may be revealed in one or the other Roman basilica. And therefore the modern age, which has so widely, in its turn, superimposed pagan sexuality upon the Christian marriage form, may see here the relentless truth and (if it will) find the lesson.

About books of so much power and substance, much else might be said. The historian of the novel will some day have to trace a current in fiction which runs steadily from Walter Scott through Manzoni and Sienkiewicz to Sigrid Undset. It will then be seen how this implacable woman, who sought Catholic baptism through great personal suffering, has sent a dozen trifling theorists off their chairs and proved how a thing that "could not be done" was illustriously possible. From another point of view, serious current interest in mediaevalism cannot neglect this finest available contemporary "document," in which humdrum antiquarian detail catches the fire of the cultural soul which inspired it, until all is securely, poetically woven about The Cross. Suffice it to record here my own opinion, given for what it is worth: Sigrid Undset's trilogy embodies more of life, seen understandingly and seriously, though unfortunately without humor, than any novel written since Dostoievsky's Brothers Karamazov. It is also, very probably, the noblest work of fiction ever to have been inspired by the Catholic art of life.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Gilbert and Sullivan: A Critical Appreciation of the Savoy Opera, by A. H. Godwin; with an introduction by G. K. Chesterton. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

MR. GODWIN'S book possesses gusto and good sense. It takes up the various operas in detail, picks out the choicest morsels, and very justly apportions what is due to Sullivan and what to Gilbert; but the essence of what he has to say he says in the first two sentences of the book when he writes: "Gilbert and Sullivan is one of the outstanding examples of partnership genius. Neither of the men who created it was a genius himself, but the association of the two, a gifted dramatist with a gifted composer, gave the world an art-form that has undeniable genius." This is well and truly said.

The rest of Mr. Godwin's book is of value in elaborating this theme, and if his writing is at times naïf it has at least the engaging freshness of youthful enthusiasm. But the real joy of the volume lies in Mr. Chesterton's introduction. Here is the real Chesterton engaged in expressing himself on a subject made for him as for no other living writer of English. Chesterton himself is the most doughty of the slayers of Georgian British humbug, as Gilbert was of the humbug of the Victorian age, and into the eight and a half pages of his introduction he packs a whole volume of sound common sense.

"As things stand," writes Mr. Chesterton, "the Victorian monument which best supports and survives the change of fashion, is not the laureate ode and office any more than the Albert Memorial: it is all that remains of the Savoy Opera." There is more than a half truth in this statement, for Gilbert is more popular than ever today on both sides of the Atlantic, which is more than can be said for many of the major prophets of the age which once was looked upon as the rival to that of Elizabeth. Further on he says:

"His satire was really much too intelligent to be intelligible. It is doubtful whether by itself it would ever have been completely popular. Something came to his aid which is more popular than the love of satire: the profound and popular love of song. A genius of another school of art crossed his path and coöperated in his work; giving wings to his words, and sending them soaring into the sky." Here Chesterton reënforces the truth of Mr. Godwin's opening words, a truth which may be well pondered by every librettist and composer: that light opera, to hold any permanent value, must be a product of a true wedding of words and music. This was what has made the enduring significance of the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. In them two men became truly one.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

The Drummer of Fyvie and Other Verse, by Faith Van Valkenburgh Vilas. New York: Reader Editor, Inc. $1.50.

ONE comes upon this book of verse with a feeling of refreshment, for here is beauty. It contains none of the simpering, hackneyed lines so frequent in current poetry, but is fresh, virile, and thought-containing.

The book is divided into three parts: Words, Wagon-Ruts, and Wine. Among the shorter poems that stand out, are Wine, Unrequited, and Ultima Thule. In these three the author presents old thoughts in a new and convincing manner to be highly commended for its originality. These poems are inherent with music, not only in rhythm, but in structure. Many of them have, indeed, been set to music.

In the title-poem, the author has caught something of the antiquity and the hereditary gloom of the old Castle of the Fyvie—some of the mournfulness that has come down through the ages as part of the legend that surrounds it. The poem sweeps along to a solemn but dramatic climax, making it one of the finest of modern ballads.

R. I. C.

Cities of Italy, by Arthur Symons. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

A REISSUE of Arthur Symons's carefully wrought meditations upon major Italian cities gives one an opportunity to see with what robustness the spirit of the lavender 'nineties can face these strenuous days. It is a far cry, indeed, from the softly tinted restfulness of the Italy Mr. Symons knew in his youth and the bustling "empire" presided over by Mussolini. Yet there are abiding qualities and things, and it is interesting to see how the aesthetic Englishman's prose renders them. The following critique of Raphael seems rather faded these days: "His gracious saints have never, before they attained sanctity, suffered all the enlightening ardors of sin." It is no longer so clear as it once was that "the most beautiful possession of Rome is the Campagna." But elsewhere the rendition is surprisingly apt and just. The monument to Vittorio Emanuele is a "hulking parvenu" for whom there is no excuse. Florence is still "a corridor, through which the beauty and the finery of the world have passed." Pages in this book, such as those devoted to St. Peter's or to the wharves of Venice, are really vibrant and promise to abide.

T. C.

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THE QUIET CORNER

I counsel thee, shut not thy heart nor thy library.—C. LAMB.

"Something should be done," pronounced Britannicus, severely regarding Dr. Angelicus and Euphemia, "about the woeful ignorance of the American people."

"Indeed?" sniffed Euphemia. "No Britisher can make a remark like that in this library and not be called on for explanations."

"Indeed not," declared Dr. Angelicus, seriously. "I don't like your tone, Britannicus. Here you are in this library, surrounded by associates who represent—ahem—well, the utmost in American culture and intellectualism—in a mental atmosphere expressive of liberalism, sound aestheticism, and beauty. (You will pardon my seeming lack of modesty, but I speak for my confrères as well as for myself.) And yet you regard us superciliously, and speak about woeful American ignorance!"

"Oh, I don't mean anything personal," hastily interposed Britannicus. "I was speaking of the American people at large, apropos of this recent item from the New York Times which, as an indication of national ignorance, is distressing in the extreme."

"Haven't you been neglecting your London papers recently?" asked Euphemia, mildly.

"You would find no London paper carrying an item like the following," declared Britannicus. "I beg you to listen:

" 'Recently the Health Department of Harrison, New Jersey, sent out notices to parents requesting them to permit their children to undergo the Schick test. The health authorities failed to explain in the notices that the test was to determine the susceptibility of persons to diphtheria. Yesterday the department received the following letter from a mother: 'I refuse positively to permit either of my boys to take the Schick test. I have read the book and seen the play and I want you to know that I don't approve of them.' "

"I heartily commend that sort of ignorance," said the Doctor. "At least, she is perfectly sound on the proper reading matter for youth." The Doctor could not restrain a significant look in Euphemia's direction.

"But the stupidity of it!" exclaimed Britannicus. "I think you agree with me that no London paper would ever see the necessity of carrying such an item."

"We do, indeed," said Euphemia. "They wouldn't see the necessity because they wouldn't see the joke."

"Distressing ignorance is never a joke," maintained Britannicus. "That's just one of the many troubles with you Americans. You—"

"We haven't time today," broke in Angelicus, "to go into all the troubles you find with Americans.

"No," said Euphemia, "for the longest day in the year doesn't come until June 21."

"So let's stick to this matter of alleged ignorance," supplemented the Doctor. "What's the rest of your bill of complaints on that score?"

"Well," replied Britannicus, "the terrible lack of culture of the American people was again borne in upon me the other evening by some remarks I heard in the theatre lobby as I was coming out from a performance of Caponsacchi, in which Walter Hampden has been giving such a memorable piece of acting this winter."

"Surely the Hampden audiences represent the best in American culture," protested Angelicus.

"That's just it—I'm afraid they do," replied Britannicus. "You can judge then, to what a low ebb it has fallen, when I repeat, verbatim, the conversation I overheard between two

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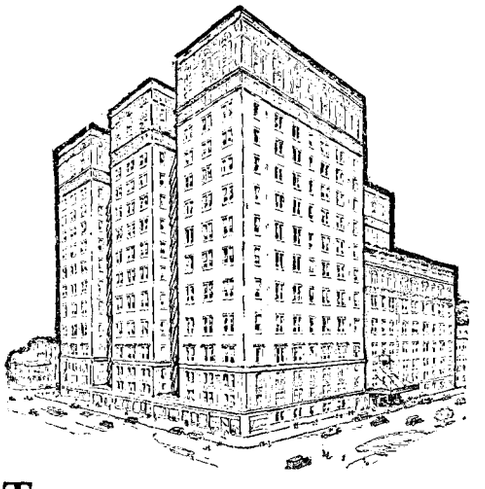

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ladies. The play, as you know, is a dramatic version of Browning's The Ring and the Book. One of the ladies said:

"'I didn't think much of it, did you?'

"'No,' replied the other, 'but then it's by Browning, so what could you expect? No wonder Peaches won't have anything more to do with him!'"

"Delicious!" gurgled the Doctor. "If that's American ignorance, I wouldn't have it changed for anything."

"You're hopeless!" exclaimed Britannicus. "But perhaps one or two of the other incidents that I've noticed will convince you. As an instance of the shocking vulgarity prevailing among American young people, I was walking behind two charming-looking young girls recently, and overheard this conversation:

"'How did you like Tom?' asked one.

"'Oh, all right,' replied the other, 'but, gee, he chews gum sumpin' fierce.'

"'Oh, it's all right to chew gum,' retorted her friend, 'but you gotta know how to chew it!'"

"There's nothing the matter with that," remarked Angelicus. "You wouldn't rob a nation of one of its native accomplishments, would you? The artistic chewing of gum is, in reality, an American fine art."

"One of the same young women," went on Britannicus in disgust, "then said to the other:

"'We went to the Burglars' Bin for dinner. Gee, they charge dreadful there. Cover charges, two dollars; and the covers were dirty at that!'"

"I'm sure of it!" exclaimed Euphemia. "They were the last time I was there, and they probably haven't changed them."

"No, no, Britannicus," said the Doctor, smiling as he relaxed in his chair, "you haven't proved your point at all."

"But you haven't heard all yet," declared Britannicus. "The incidents I have related are perhaps not a fair gauge, since they concern chiefly individuals who make no pretense of belonging to the cultured class. But as for those who do, I went not long ago to a party made up of some charming American young people, most of whom were college graduates. After dinner we played a game with a book of questions on odd bits of information which every well-educated person should be able to answer. One question was: 'Name a war song popular in America during the period of the Civil War.'"

"That should have been easy," admitted Angelicus. "Couldn't any of them answer that?"

"The young lady to whom the question was posed," replied Britannicus, "said: 'Let me see. Why, it must have been Seeing Nellie Home!'"

"What made her think that was a war song?" inquired Angelicus.

"Ah," said Britannicus, "I wondered, too, at the time. But later I understood. You see, I was her escort."

—THE LIBRARIAN.

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